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Elzinga pleased with success of Computers on Wheels

Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga has praised department staff members and officials of IBM Canada for the success of a three-year project which has introduced computers to more than 2,000 Alberta farm businesses.

At an Edmonton reception which wrapped up the Computers on Wheels program, the Minister said the dedication and generosity of all involved has helped many producers improve their business management skills.

The Computers on Wheels program was a three-year pilot project of Alberta Agriculture, IBM Canada and the University of Alberta which began in 1985. The idea was to develop a mobile training system which could travel the province giving farmers hands-on experience in personal computer operation as it related to farm business management.

IBM, the only company to respond to the concept, donated 22 personal computer systems to be used in the program which is unique in North America.

Mr. Elzinga stated, "On behalf of the department I extend my deepest appreciation to IBM Canada for their super co-operation in this project. And I wish to salute our own department people for their excellent work in providing a valuable service to the farming community.

"In this age of information we do our best to keep producers informed about the latest production technology and farm management skills. This program has been one more method of meeting that objective."

After three years, the Computers on Wheels program delivered 250 courses to more than 2,100 participants in 76 Alberta communities. Overall cost to Alberta Agriculture was $160,000 which was partially offset by course registration fees of $60,000.

While the first phase is now complete, negotiations are underway to continue the service under a new partnership expected to involve, Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Career Development and Employment and Alberta community colleges in Lethbridge, Olds, Vermilion and Fairview.

Brian Olafson, manager of IBM's northern Alberta branch headquartered in Edmonton, said Computers on Wheels "exemplifies what a successful project should look like".

(Cont'd)

Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga, seated, gets a crash course in operating computers during a reception in Edmonton marking the successful wrap up of the Computers on Wheels project. Assisting the minister in the use of this IBM portable personal computer is from left, Wilson Loree, head of the department's farm business management branch in Olds, Ron Graham and Brian Olafson, officials of IBM Canada. The computer company, in co-operation with Alberta Agriculture and the University of Alberta, donated 22 personal computers to be used in a three-year project which provided more than 2,000 Alberta farm managers with hands-on computer training.

(Cont'd)

He said the project achieved success by combining IBM's technology, with the expertise of the agriculture industry and Canadian creativity.

"It was very useful in helping producers understand the concept and operation of computers and helped them sort through a vast amount of data to find that information which is most useful to them," Olafson told the 40 guests and officials attending the reception.

"As well, the project makes our own industries more competitive and also helps develop technology which is exportable to other provinces or other parts of North America."

Along with thanking Mr. Elzinga he also acknowledged the efforts of , Deputy Minister Ben McEwen, Assistant Deputy Ministers Doug Radke and Bill Dent and farm business management branch head, Wilson Loree.

Ron Graham, IBM's manager of joint programs for the western region, headquartered in Vancouver, told the group that Computers on Wheels exceeded all expectations.

He credited Wilson Loree's team of instructors and project co-ordinators who took Computers on Wheels on the road and "delivered top quality courses to hundreds of Alberta farmers."

Assistant deputy minister Doug Radke said the project produced several unexpected benefits. Beginning as an Alberta Agriculture, University of Alberta and IBM Canada project, Computers on Wheels went on to involve the four provincial colleges.

The project also led to the development of a conference of computer software developers focusing on the needs of the agricultural industry. The second annual Agricultural Management Systems - Directions and Visions Conference will be held May 9 to 11 in Edmonton.

As well, the Computers on Wheels course prompted many farmers to take more courses either in computer use or other areas of farm business management.

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Farmers urged to plan ahead for water supplies program

Alberta farmers expecting to make use of a recently announced provincial water supply assistance program should begin their planning now says the co-ordinator of Alberta Agriculture's section of the program.

Applications for dugout assistance and bookings for water pumping equipment should be made early in the season, says Bruce Olson, program co-ordinator in Edmonton.

Olson says because a waiting list may develop for some aspects of the program, farmers facing water shortages, or interested in improving water storage capability on their farms should act as soon as possible.

"Application forms for new dugout construction should be available within a few days," says Olson. " Because of expected demand, there could be delays at a time when some of this work is most needed. Farmers should be taking steps now to schedule contractors and book use of water pumping equipment."

Alberta Agriculture district and regional offices will have forms and program details.

Olson is co-ordinating one part of the $20 million Alberta Water Supplies Assistance Program announced April 21 by Premier Don Getty. Four government departments are participating in the program which was developed in response to the dry conditions in parts of Alberta this year.

Alberta Agriculture has allocated nearly $4 million for two types of work - rehabilitation and construction of dugouts or other stockwatering facilities, and farm dugout pumping. Bonafide farmers completing work on their farm properties are eligible to apply.

Alberta Environment is providing $10 million to assist individuals and communities with cost of drilling water wells; Alberta Transportation and Utilities is providing $6 million to assist with the cost of building long-term water conveyance systems; and Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife has contributed $500,000 for the cost of developing wells and other water sources on grazing reserves.

(Cont'd)

Referring to the $2.91 million Alberta Agriculture Dugout and Stockwatering Facility Construction and Rehabilitation Program, Olson says farmers can receive up to $1,650 in assistance per project to upgrade existing dugouts or construct new dugouts.

The new dugout construction program dovetails with the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration's (PFRA's) own long-running program, says Olson. Both programs provide the same level of assistance. Funding is available for one-third of the costs or 22 cents a cubic yard (29 cents a cubic metre) of earth moved to a maximum of $1,650 per project. Farmers applying for assistance under Alberta Agriculture's program should also apply for PFRA assistance and receive a total of up to two-thirds of their costs back to a maximum of $3,300 per project.

Any new water storage facility must at least meet PFRA minimum size specifications and farmers must notify PFRA before construction begins. The completed dugout must have a minimum volume of 2,616 cubic yards (2,000 cubic metres) and have a minimum depth at centre of 13.15 feet (four metres) for pasture use, or 14.75 feet (4.5 metres) for domestic use. A dugout with a volume of 2,616 cubic yards, would measure about 140 feet long, by 80 feet wide, by 14 feet deep.

Olson says PFRA specialists will inspect the dugout construction site before work begins and make a final check after construction. PFRA will issue Alberta Agriculture a final inspection certificate which triggers a payout under the program.

Application forms for the Alberta Agriculture portion of the grant will soon be available from the department's district and regional offices and from PFRA offices. Any work to be covered under the program must be started, completed and invoiced between April 1 and December 31, 1988.

Olson notes that stockwater dams are also covered under this program and specifications are available from PFRA offices.

Under the dugout rehabilitation program a farmer can recover up to 50 per cent of invoiced costs to a maximum of $1,650 per project to upgrade or expand any existing dugout on his property to at least the minimum PFRA specifications.

(Cont'd)

Smaller existing dugouts upgraded to PFRA standards, may be considered as new dugout construction projects under the federal guidelines and also be eligible for assistance under the PFRA program.

If the dugout already meets size requirements, the rehabilitation program still covers any type of upgrading work such as cleaning, enlarging or deepening, and improving livestock access.

To be eligible for Alberta Agriculture's grant, a farmer does not require approval before starting improvements, but a contractor's invoice detailing work performed must be submitted. Alberta Agriculture specialists will make on-site inspections of completed projects. Again if a farmer is making application under PFRA's new dugout assistance program, prior approval is required before work begins.

Under the $925,000 Alberta Agriculture Farm Dugout Pumping Program, farmers can rent high volume pumps and irrigation pipe to move water to farm dugouts. The daily rental fees under this existing program have been reduced by 50 per cent for 1988.

Olson says farmers should contact their nearest Alberta Agriculture district or regional office to book the equipment. The department will deliver and pick up pumps and pipeline at the farm gate, while the farmer is responsible for manpower and equipment to set up and complete the transfer of water.

The reduced rental rates this year are $50 for the first pump, $100 for the first mile of pipe and trailer, $25 for the second and subsequent pumps and $50 for second and subsequent miles of pipe on trailers.

For more information on Alberta Agriculture's water supplies assistance contact any district or regional office or Bruce Olson at 427-2181.

For information on other aspects of the provincial government water supplies assistance package contact Peter Watson at Alberta Environment at 427-6111; Grant Bridgeman at Alberta Transportation and Utilities at 427-3021; or Bill Irvine at Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife at 427-5256.

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For immediate release

Administrators retire after 68 years of service

Two long-time employees of the Surface Rights Board, who retired after a combined 68 years of service, have been recognized by Premier Don Getty and Associate Agriculture Minister Shirley Cripps.

John Hauck, secretary to the board retired this year after 31 years of service, while Edward Shupenia, who most recently served as executive director, retired after 37 years of service.

The two men received best wishes from co-workers and private industry as well as a plaque from Premier Getty and Mrs. Cripps.

The Surface Rights Board is a quasi-judicial board that deals with disputes over oil and gas and utility company requests for access for power transmission lines, well sites, pipelines and telephone line rights-of-way.

In cases where a private agreement can not be reached the board holds hearings to determine compensation payable by the operator and the person entitled to receive the compensation.

John Hauck joined what was then the Board of Arbitration in 1956 as 'clerk' and filled several positions over the years. He was appointed secretary to the board in June 1980 and held that position until his retirement earlier this year.

Edward Shupenia joined the Board of Arbitration in 1950 when it was part of the Attorney General's department. The board was later moved to the department of mines and minerals and subsequently to agriculture.

Shupenia began his career as a 'clerk' earning $1,380 per year. He held several posts with the board including that of secretary before being named executive director in 1980.

Following the retirements the roles of board secretary and executive director were combined into one position which is now held by Alan Champion, a long-time administrator with Alberta Agriculture.

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For immediate release

Black spot of canola catches farmers' attention

Farmers can take steps to control losses caused by black spot of canola, a disease affecting crops in some parts of Alberta, says a specialist with the Alberta Environmental Centre at Vegreville.

Dr. Prem Kharbanda, says many farmers have expressed concern about the disease, also known as Grey Leaf Spot, following severe outbreaks in parts of central Alberta last year.

Kharbanda says farmers shouldn't rely on seed testing as a way of determining risk. Only seed with a high germination count should be used, and all canola seed should be treated with a recommended fungicide. Crop rotation is also recommended as a way to break the disease cycle.

"Farmers are quite worried about the disease in 1988 and are asking whether they should get their seed tested," says Kharbanda, a plant pathologist. "But testing doesn't provide a true picture."

"Testing seed for the presence of the fungi that cause blackspot is not recommended as infected seed is not important in the development of the disease in the crop," says Kharbanda. "Infected debris serves as the major source of the fungus for the new crop in the spring."

The disease is caused by two fungi, Alternaria brassicae and A. raphani. All above-ground parts are susceptible. The diseased parts show spots ranging from grey to black which increase in size. Several spots may develop and can cover whole infected leaves. Infected pods may ripen prematurely and shatter, causing considerable yield loss. Seed infection results in reduced seed germination.

The fungus survives in infected seed, infected debris of canola, mustard or other weed hosts including stinkweed, flixweed and tumbling weed. The disease becomes important only in years when the weather stays wet for several days during the later part of plant growth and maturity.

(Cont'd)

"During wet periods spores of the fungus cause infections which bear fresh spores within a few days enabling the fungus to cause secondary infections. This disease cycle may be repeated several times during the season depending upon the availability of moisture. Wet weather during pod formation and maturity could permit severe disease development on pods that could result in economic grain yield losses."

The specialist says although there are no canola varieties resistant to the disease, Argentine type canola is less susceptible to black spot than Polish varieties.

There is no registered chemical control for the disease, however, seed should be treated with a recommended fungicide to control seed rot and seedling blight disease. Only seed with high germination - over 90 per cent - should be used for planting. All shrunken and discolored seeds should also be removed.

"A crop rotation of at least three years between canola crops, and control of volunteer canola and cruciferous weeds, is also strongly recommended to reduce the prevalence of black spot disease in canola crops," says Kharbanda.

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For immediate release

Optimism forecast for grain and oilseed prices

As world grain and oilseed supplies decline, changes in production will play a greater role in determining prices, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Charlie Pearson, a grains market analyst, says the world isn't in a shortage situation, but if drought or other weather factors affect yields in any of the major producing countries, prices will quickly respond.

Pearson says the drop in supplies has improved the market situation. Just a couple years ago production shortfalls would have had little impact on prices becauses of the record carryover stocks.

In a quarterly report on the three major commodities, the market analysis branch specialist says wheat prices should gradually continue to improve this year; he sees some light at the end of the tunnel for barley growers; and canola prices appear relatively strong.

However, the author of the Wheat and Feedgrains Situation and Outlook, says the tightening supply situation makes price forecasting difficult.

"International wheat prices continued their gradual improvement over the past quarter, reflecting the tighter supply demand situation around the world, both in terms of quantity of grain available and the distribution of milling quality wheats among the major wheat producing countries," he says.

"Canadian wheat exports continue to benefit not only from expanded world wheat trade, but also the relatively tight world supplies of milling quality wheats. These factors point to both good delivery opportunities and a much smaller carryover at the end of the current crop year."

Looking at feedgrains, Pearson described world supplies as "burdensome" but noted that stocks will be further reduced at the end of the 1987-88 crop year.

(Cont'd)

He says decreases in world coarse grain carryovers have mainly been the result of large farmer participation in U.S. government feed grain acreage reduction programs.

"The Canadian feedgrain situation mirrors that of world coarse grains - that is, large supplies and low prices," says Pearson. "Barley carryovers at the end of the current crop year will be up significantly from last year."

He predicted barley exports in this current crop year will be down to about 4.5 million tonnes, compared to 6.7 million tonnes last year.

Looking ahead of the 1988 growing season, Pearson agrees with Statistics Canada estimates that Canadian farmers will plant about 11.1 million acres, down about 15 per cent from 1987.

Turning to oilseeds, the specialist says he expects 1988-89 could mark the third consecutive year of declining oilseed stocks.

Pearson says canola offers the best price prospect of any commodity. He predicted elevator bid prices for new crop canola to increase to the $275 to $285 per tonne range over the next month, up from a low of about $240 last fall.

He said the Canadian canola market will closely follow the U.S. soybean market. Soybean stocks were down at the end of the crop year in August 1987. A further reduction is expected in August 1988 and again in 1989.

U.S. farmers are expected to produce about 52 million tonnes of soybeans this year, while soybean usage is estimated at 55 million tonnes.

Pearson said soybean prices are expected to improve over next month as the market encourages farmers to increase the number of acres seeded to soybeans. The U.S. soybean market will be very sensitive to weather concerns during the summer.

Pearson expects Canadian farmers will plant about 7.7 million acres this year, and produce about four million tonnes of seed from average yields of about 23 bushels per acre.

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(Because figures and estimates contained in this report can change quickly, editors should confirm numbers with the analyst before publication or broadcasting.)

For Immediate release

Better days ahead for Alberta honey industry

While 1988 will present some tough challenges for Alberta honey producers, it should be a turnaround year for an industry coping with a sudden loss of bee stocks and low honey prices.

An Alberta Agriculture market analysis says the cloud over the Canadian industry does have a silver lining and producers who make it through 1988 should see some rewards in 1989 and beyond.

"The current situation facing Canadian beekeepers is not favorable," says Fred Boyce in his quarterly report on the Honey Situation and Outlook. "A relatively large crop, above average carryover stocks, sluggish export demand and low prices are combining to create financial difficulties for many beekeepers.

"As well, many beekeepers rely on imports of package bees and queens from California and, with the closure of the border to bee imports supplies are no longer available to Canadian honey producers."

Boyce says federal government officials imposed a two-year ban on imports of U.S. bees into Canada to prevent the spread of parasites which are devastating some sectors of the American beekeeping industry. While the ban provides protection to the Canadian industry, it creates short term hardship for many producers who relied on bees brought from the U.S. for the seasonal production of honey.

"On the positive side, Canadian beekeepers produced nearly 90 million pounds of honey in 1987, the second largest crop on record," says the market analyst. "The Special Canadian Grains Program has been amended for 1987 to include honey, and the Alberta Beekeepers Disaster Assistance Program will help beekeepers affected by the ban on U.S. bee imports and poor honey market prices."

Boyce says bulk honey prices have improved over the past month and further price increases for the 1988 crop to the 50 to 55 cent a pound range ($1.10 to $1.20 per kilogram), are possible.

(Cont'd)

The specialist says there are several factors which point to an optimistic future. The worldwide surplus of honey is declining, there is an end in sight to the large U.S. inventory that has been flooding the market, production in the U.S. and Mexico and other countries is down, and usage is increasing.

"The longer term prospects are generally positive," he says. "Canadian beekeepers, if they can survive the current depressed conditions and maintain the high standard of Canadian honey, should look forward to improved economic conditions in 1989 and beyond."

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(Because figures and estimates contained in this report can change quickly, editors should confirm numbers with the analyst before publication or broadcasting.)

For immediate release

Good opportunities exist for horse breeders

Producing good quality horses for racing or pleasure riding is as much an agricultural business as growing crops, says the head of country's only provincial horse industry branch.

Doug Milligan, who heads this livestock production area for Alberta Agriculture, told a recent conference that raising horses should not be confused with the sporting end of the business.

"The production of horses is an agricultural activity," he said. "For a farmer to succeed he must separate the agricultural activity of breeding and raising horses, from the sport and recreation aspects.

"The end use of that horse for pleasure riding, racing or other sporting purposes is not an agricultural activity. An equivalent example involving crops is malting barley. It is an agricultural activity for a farmer to produce this barley although the end use of the grain is for the brewing industry."

Alberta is the only province in Canada to have a horse industry branch as part of the department of agriculture. Milligan, headquartered in Calgary and two other specialists, provide extension services to the provincial industry in areas of production, management and marketing.

Speaking to Alberta Agriculture's Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit Conference, the branch head said there are good opportunities for Alberta farmers to raise horses, but they have to be sound managers and use good business and production skills.

He said there is a demand for top quality Standardbred and Thoroughbred horses for use by Alberta's horseracing industry, a demand for good Quarter Horses for pleasure riding, as well as export demand for good quality Alberta bred horses that can be used in Europe for a growing interest in Western riding.

Milligan said Alberta produces only about half of the stock it needs for the multi-million dollar provincial horse racing industry. He said there is room for Alberta breeders to supply about 300 Thoroughbreds and about 200 Standardbred horses annually for the local race tracks.

(Cont'd)

Good opportunities exist for horse breeders (cont'd)

There are about 400 days of racing a year at tracks in Calgary and Edmonton, drawing annual attendance of 1.5 million people, who wager about $200 million a year. Purses paid out amount to $10 million.

Milligan says all money collected by the provincial government from racing is pumped back into the horse breeding industry through the race industry development fund.

Aside from race horses, Milligan says there is a strong demand both at home and abroad for good quality Quarter Horses which appeal to the average person as pleasure riding horses. Alberta produces about 4,000 Quarter Horses a year. Breeders export about 200 horses annually to Europe, although Milligan says it is hard to keep up to demand.

He told the conference there may also be opportunity to supply North America with sport horses from Europe. He says North Americans like the size and quality of European-bred horses.

The animals, used for dressage, English riding and stadium jumping must be strong, tall horses, about 16 hands high with good conformation. Milligan said more breeding stock could be brought from Europe and raised here.

"There are good opportunities to produce horses for sport and recreation purposes, but farmers shouldn't let themselves get carried away and forget their business skills," he said. "Like any other livestock or crop enterprise farmers shouldn't jump into horse breeding blindly. They need to learn the business slowly, develop a business plan and know where their markets are before they begin full production."

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For immediate release

Agriculture in midst of revolution

Agriculture is in the midst of the third major revolution since the invention of the reaper, says an Illinois economist.

The mechanical revolution dominated the industry for more than 100 years, says Dr. Thomas Frey, a professor of agricultural finance at the University of Illinois. And that revolution was followed by the technological revolution which began in the mid-1930s.

"The industry is now well entrenched in a third major revolution, namely the financial and business management revolution," he told a recent Albert Agriculture conference.

"We are witnessing a transition in agriculture from 'just a way of life' to a full-fledged business operation that includes a special way of life."

Frey, speaking to the Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit Conference, said although the mechanical and techological aspects are still important, they alone will not assure business success. He says understanding the financial and business management concepts and procedures is essential.

The economist told farmers although the economics of farming are under stress, they should not loose hope.

"It is crucial that you maintain a positive attitude and dogged determination to make those changes in your operation that are needed to keep your farm operation on a firm financial basis...however far reaching those changes seem to be," he said. "Doing nothing differently could be the kiss of death."

Frey told producers to consciously develop personal, family and business goals and to set priorities. Farmers should develop a strategy to work toward those goals. He warned however, this may not be a good time to expand.

(Cont'd)

"Be especially cautious about bringing new members into your operation at this point in time," he said. "Typically, as sons or daughters and their spouses are brought into operations, the volume and net income are not expanded enough to adequately cover the new people. Debt may even be increased to facilitate some expansion, and this may be beyond what the operation can handle.

"Young people may need to take full time off-farm employment rather than immediately going back into a family operation."

Frey said if finances are particularly tight to take steps to cut back.

"Make every effort to get your debt reduced to a manageable level, avoid capital purchases, and do everything possible to generate a positive net income on an accrual basis," he said.

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For immediate release

Hog producers will have to fine tune their business skills

North America hog producers will have to become even more businesslike if they hope to keep pace with industry trends, says a U.S. economist.

Dr. Gene Murra, an extension economist at South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota, says with major industry changes predicted, North American producers will either have to learn more about production and marketing or hire people to provide advice in these fields.

Looking at long-term trends for the hog industry, Murra said changes will dominate four major areas: 1. there will be a much greater emphasis on production efficiency, 2. a much greater emphasis on marketing techniques, 3. continued trends toward industry concentration at all levels, and 4. more regulations.

"The net result of all these changes really will mean that producers must become even more businesslike in their approach to hog production and marketing," he says. "They likely will either become experts in production and marketing or they will pay someone else for assistance in those areas. Pork production will not be a sideline or secondary enterprise, but rather the main income producer on farms where pork is produced."

Murra told farmers attending Alberta Agriculture's market outlook conference that demand for production efficiency will force producers to either expand or drop out of the business.

He said studies in Iowa shows that one-third of the top producers achieved a cost of production breakeven point of about 31 cents a pound in U.S. dollars.

"The fact that the top one-third of producers had costs that low means the production technology is there," said Murra. "Since the pork industry is largely competitive in nature, there is relatively ready access to that technology, so more producers can be expected to use it. As "innovators'" costs move lower, their profits are larger than for those who haven't become as efficient. This means that producer prices will tend to move toward the cost of production of the more efficient producers.

(Cont'd)

Hog producers have to fine tune their business skills (cont'd)

"While the average, small-scale pork producers probably are ahead of the average, small-scale beef producers in adopting cost reducing technology and management, they probably are behind the poultry industry. Many producers still have 'a long way to go'. Producers who adopt the technology will survive. Those who don't, won't, at least not for long."

Murra said he feels "efficient producers" will be those who market at least 1,000 head of hogs a year.

Marketing will become more important he told the Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference in Calgary.

He said farmers will need to develop marketing plans, there will be more use of marketing clubs where 10 or 20 farmers join together to develop marketing strategy, a greater use of forward pricing, making use of cash forward contracts, hedgings and other options and a greater use of agribusiness and marketing services.

"Producers currently make extensive use of feed consultants and veterinarians, tax consultants and attorneys when needed. But they have been less willing to use other business consultants. Because of the complexities involved in many areas, greater use of outside advise and information will be required. And, producers will be expected to pay for those services rather than 'get them free'.

Murra also told producers to be prepared for concentration of the industry. He said their will be fewer hog producers raising more hogs. As well the processing, wholesaling, feed production and most areas involved in the production-marketing chain will follow the same trend.

Turning to regulations, he said more controls will be in force in several areas. He said there will be a greater ability to detect "undesirable" elements in food as consumers demand "safe food". Animals rights with its potential for regulations will also become a more important issue, and concern over the effect of feed additives will also prompt controls.

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For immediate release

Sow reproductivity improved

Researchers at the University of Alberta have found at least two ways to improve the reproductive capability of sows, says U of A swine specialist.

Dr. Frank Aherne, speaking to a recent agriculture research conference, said hog producers can boost the reproductive rates of their sows by injecting them with the intramuscular drug GnRH at mating and allowing them to eat as much as they want during the period between weaning and mating.

In the last five years researchers in the U of A's Department of Animal Science have confirmed that rationing the feed of sows during lactation hinders the reproductive capacity of the animals, said Aherne.

The restriction of food intake causes the sows to lose backfat. It also increases the interval between weaning and mating, decreases their conception rate, and increases embryo mortality, said Aherne.

Speaking to Alberta Agriculture's Farming for the Future Conference, Aherne said he and his colleagues conducted four experiments to determine how sow weight loss during lactation affected reproduction and how these effects could be corrected.

In the first experiment 96 sows were randomly assigned to groups that were either fed ad libitum (as much as they wanted) or rationed during lactation. The rationed sows lost more weight and weaned fewer and smaller pigs that did their better fed counterparts. They also experienced higher embryo mortality rates.

The second experiment involved 72 sows, some of which were rationed and injected with the intramuscular drug GnRH. Aherne said the injections appeared to decrease embryo mortality in rationed sows.

In the third experiment, 34 sows were fed at varying rates, inseminated and then slaughtered 25 days later. An examination of their reproductive tracts revealed the better fed pigs had higher pregnancy and embryo survival rates than did their rationed sisters. A fourth experiment achieved similar results.

(Cont'd)

"Sow reproductive inefficiency remains the number one factor affecting the profitability of a farrow to finish swine unit," said Aherne. "Contemporary trends toward leaner meats have induced hog producers to initiate restricted feeding practices which, unless implemented carefully, will reduce sow reproductive capability. Hog growers must remember that part of maximizing production is maintaining high birth rates."

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For immediate release

Easy formula for calculating seeding rates

With farmers' thoughts soon turning to seeding the 1988 crop, one Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist is suggesting a relatively easy formula for calculating seeding rates and calibrating the seed drill.

Neil Miller, DA in Lacombe says the process involves some time and a little math, but should give producers good results.

"Experiments have shown that approximately 20 plants per square foot, or 215 plants per square metre, is a good plant density for most cereal crops," says Miller. "Seed size varies between varieties and between years. Seeding rate must also take into account expected plant survival.

"This term 'expected survival' is the per cent of germination, less expected seedling mortality which is usually two to three per cent and sometimes higher under adverse conditions."

Miller provides the following procedure for determining seeding rate:

1. Count out 1,000 seeds and obtain the weight in grams (g).
2. Seeding rate (lb/ac) = $\frac{\text{weight of 1,000 seeds in grams} \times 2}{\%\ \text{expected survival}}$

Example: Weight of 1,000 seeds barley = 40 grams

Germination = 93 per cent

Expected seeding mortality = 3 per cent

Seeding Rate (lb/ac) = $\frac{40 \times 2}{(93-3)\%} = \frac{80}{0.9} = 89$ lb/ac

Seed drill calibration:

1. Fill drill
2. Measure a 100-foot distance
3. Collect output from one drill run over the 100 feet
4. Weight of sample collected in grams = half calculated rate (lb/ac).

Example: Calculated seeding rate = 90 lb/ac

Sample collected should (g) = $\frac{90}{2} = 45$ g/100 ft of row 6" spacing

For nine-inch row spacing the amount collected should be 45 X 1.5 = 67 g.

(Cont'd)

5. Adjust drill until you collect the calculated weight of seed desired (the example = 45 grams).

"All that is involved is counting and weighing 1,000 seeds, measuring a 100-foot distance, collecting and weighing the output from one drill run and a little bit of simple math," says Miller. "The results are correct plant densities at minimum cost."

For more information on establishing seeding rates contact Neil Miller in Lacombe at 782-3301.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

For immediate release

Good May moisture necessary for normal crops

If rainfall returns to normal in May and the rest of the 1988 growing season, Alberta farmers could still see a good crop this fall, says an Alberta Agriculture weather specialist.

Peter Dzikowski, a weather resource specialist in Edmonton, says while many parts of Alberta are dry, it is too early to call game over.

"Most of central and northern Alberta reported precipitation amounts of around 20 mm, just above normal for April, although most of it fell at the end of the month," he says. "But if it is followed by near or above normal May precipitation, that should provide the soil moisture needed for germination and early crop growth.

"In those parts of Alberta, where soil moisture reserves are low, the success of the 1988 crop season rests on receiving timely amounts of near or above normal precipitation in June and July."

In a review of the April weather situation Dzikowski says it's obvious farmers didn't received the mositure they had hoped for. Precipitation amounts of zero were reported at Rocky Mountain House and Coronation, while stations in southern Alberta reported less than two millimetres (mm) of precipitation - which was below five per cent of normal.

Dzikowski says precipitation amounts from November 1, 1987 to the end of April, 1988 were so low that they occur with a probability of less than five per cent, or about four or five times a century.

April continued the over-winter trend of above normal temperatures. Average temperatures for the month varied from 8.7 Celsius (C) at Medicine Hat, 3.1 degrees above normal, to 3.3 C at High Level, 2.5 degrees above normal. Grande Prairie reported a mean temperature of 7.1 C, which is 4.4 degrees above normal for April.

"Although spring is quite early this year, it is not much of a benefit because of the continued dry conditions," he says.

For more information contact Peter Dzikowski at 422-4385.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

For immediate release

Westlock 4-H member wins Premier's Award

A 17-year-old high school student from Westlock has been named recipient of the 1988 Premier's Award - the highest award given under the Alberta 4-H program.

Lisa Properzi, of R.R. 2 Westlock, was named winner of the honor, May 2 following a weekend of competitions in Olds. She was selected from 13 finalists known as the Ambassador Group.

A member of the Freedom-Naples 4-H Multi Club, Properzi said she was excited about being named recipient of the 25th annual award. She succeeds Gail Cunningham of Kelsey, who received the honor in 1987.

"I am looking forward to the opportunity to represent Alberta 4-H members in the coming year," she said. "I also wish to acknowledge my colleagues in the Ambassador Group who exemplify the qualities of the 4-H program."

The Premier's Award winner was named at the annual Provincial 4-H Selections program at Olds College. This year's program brought together 143 top 4-H members from across the province to participate in three days of activities designed to improve leadership and citizenship skills.

At the award's breakfast, 64 members were "selected" as award trip winners who will represent Alberta at major 4-H events throughout Canada and the United States over the next 12 months.

Properzi will be officially presented with her award by Premier Don Getty this summer. Among other responsibilities she will represent Alberta this fall at the national 4-H conference in Toronto, held in conjunction with the Royal Winter Fair.

An active 4-H member for the past eight years, Properzi has held several positions with the Freedom-Naples club including club reporter and vice-president.

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Contact: Lisa Properzi
674-4163

Marguerite Stark
Program Co-ordinator
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For immediate release

Make soil moisture check part of spring routine

As farmers begin spring tillage and prepare to turn cattle onto pasture, an Alberta Agriculture specialist suggests spring planning should include checking the water available in soils.

Dick Heywood, a farm water management specialist with the conservation and development branch recommends a farmers make a trip to the field with a soil auger.

He says many areas in the province had little snow cover and a combination of dry winds and above average temperatures have dried surface soil layers through the winter.

"Even on soils that entered the fall with good moisture reserves, moisture for germination may now be a problem," he says. "Germination and early plant growth require eight to 10 millimetres (mm) or one-third of an inch of water available in the top five centimetres (cm) or two inches of soil. If surface moisture is scarce, avoid tillage until just before seeding and keep tillage as shallow as possible."

Checking the soil moisture levels down through the rooting zone - a depth of 90 cm, or three feet - will help predict what crops will be drawing on between rainfalls through the growing season.

Heywood provides a chart which details how moist soils can be determined by hand texturing:

Soil Texture	Hand Texture
Coarse (Loamy Sand, Sandy Loam)	Sticks together slightly, may form a weak ball
Medium (Loam, Silt Loam, Sandy Clay Loam)	Forms a ball
Fine (Clay Loam, Silty Clay Loam, Clay)	Forms a ball and will ribbon out between thumb and forefinger.

Once you have checked the depth of moist soil in the field, the following chart indicates how many inches of moist soil is needed before recropping on stubble is recommended.

(Cont'd)

INCHES OF MOIST SOIL RECOMMENDED FOR RECROPPING ON STUBBLE

	Soil Zones		
Soil Textures	Brown	Dark Brown	Other
Coarse (Loamy Sand, Sandy Loam)	54" (120 cm)	36" (90 cm)	24" (60 cm)
Medium (Loam, Silt Loam, Sandy Clay Loam)	36" (90 cm)	24" (60 cm)	18" (45 cm)
Fine (Clay Loam, Silty Clay Loam, Clay)	24" (90 cm)	18" (45 cm)	12" (30 cm)
Approximate Available Soil Water	4" (10 cm)	3" (7.5 cm)	2" (5 cm)

Recropping is possible if soils under stubble are holding:
i) 4" (10 cm) of water in the Brown Soil Zone
ii) 3" (7.5 cm) of water in the Dark Brown Soil Zone
iii) 2" (5 cm) of water in the rest of the province's soil zones.

It takes four inches or 20 cm of water to produce a crop and every one inch or 2.5 cm of percipitation above that increases production by about four bushels per acre for most cereal and oilseeds, says Heywood.

Most cereal and oilseeds require 14 to 18 inches of water for maximum production.

On forage fields and pastures, checking soil moistures may be even more critical than cultivated fields, he says. A warm, dry fall last year promoted more forage regrowth than normal so soil moisture reserves on forage fields may be lower than expected.

"The bottom line is that checking soil moistures now will give farmers a better feel what capacity their fields have to withstand drought," says the specialist. "It may also allow them to project yields as summer rains come along, (if other management factors like weeds and grasshoppers are not a factor). Fine tuning spring tillage, grazing schedules, and crop selections can be made if soil moistures are checked."

Heywood points out that every area of the province relies on soil moisture stored outside the growing season, (in the fall and early spring) to meet crop water demands.

Contact: Dick Heywood
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Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

For immediate release

Prices affect supply of feeder lambs

The number of feeder lambs sold in Alberta could be down by as much as 45 per cent this year, according to a recent provincial survey.

Sheep producers who responded to the survey indicated an intention to raise most of their lambs to market weight. Many of them noted, however, that they would sell their lambs as feeders if they obtained the right price.

The findings were among several made in the annual Alberta sheep survey completed by nearly 40 per cent of provincial sheep producers. The findings are intended to help farmers plan their marketings for the year.

Michael Adam, an Alberta Agriculture livestock statistician who analysed the survey results, says although the situation can change sheep producers plan to be raising and selling more fat lambs in 1988 even though prices aren't likely to be as strong as 1987.

Survey results show the fat lamb supply will be up slightly from last year and marketings could increase by 1.5 to 2 per cent over 1987.

Fat lamb "prices this year have remained close to year ago levels, but it is not probable these levels will be sustained throughout the year," he says. "However, unless they decline substantially, prices should remain attractive enough to induce production."

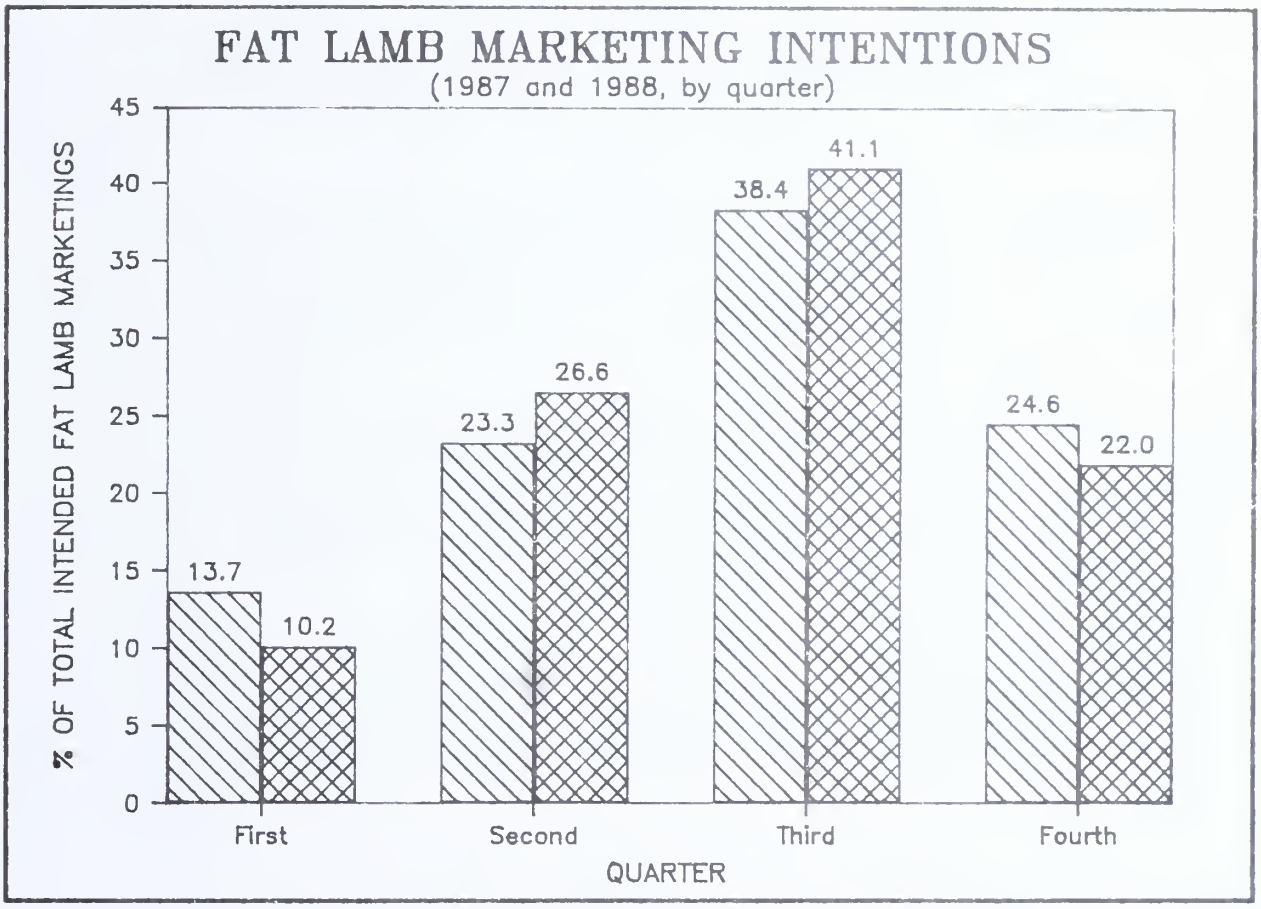
Other key points of the 1988 survey show that although the size of breeding flocks on Alberta farms is increasing, there has been little change in breeds and breeding practices in the last five years.

The Suffolk breed remains predominant while Dorsets and Columbias have gained popularity as ewe breeds. The survey notes that producers still haven't geared the lambing season to capitalize on peak price periods.

"It is apparent that the attractive spring prices were, again largely missed this year," says the report. "And this year's prospective peak supply period of June through October will coincide with a weak market."

The statistician says to hit the top market prices between January and May, the Alberta lambing season would have to be changed to the fall.

(Cont'd)



Graph compares 1988 fat lamb marketing intentions with 1987 intentions

"Breeding continues to occur mostly during the fall and out of season breeding is still not very popular among producers," says the report.

Although it is generally not a big change, the survey also showed there may be more new sheepmen in the province. On average Alberta sheep producers have 12.6 years of experience in sheep rearing. This average is 2.2 years lower than the 1984 survey average.

"Whether this decrease reflects a decrease in the average age of sheep producers can not be conclusively determined here, but in all probability it does," says the report. It also noted that Lambco, a lamb and veal processing plant in Innisfail, may be "attracting new, and younger, sheep producers" particularly in the north central region around Red Deer.

(Cont'd)

Producer comments expressed in the survey show the major areas of concern include the amount of fresh/chilled lamb imported into Canada from other sheep producing countries and the number of lamb losses through predation.

Adam says the survey, developed jointly by Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission in 1984, is intended to provide producers with information they can use in planning their production and marketing programs.

"Throughout its five years of existence, the survey has been quite popular among Alberta sheep producers," says Adam. "Response has exceeded 30 per cent at each survey. This year, more than 400 questionnaires were analysed, from a mailing list that comprised about 1,100 sheep and lamb producers."

Copies of a report incorporating a discussion on prices and price trends with survey results is available from Alberta Agriculture, Statistics Branch, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton Alberta, T6H 5T6, or by calling 427-4011.

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Contact: Michael Adam
427-4011

For immediate release

DHI privatization to benefit dairy industry

The second step in privatizing a government program providing herd monitoring services and milk production information to Alberta dairy farmers has been completed.

Ed Bristow, head of Alberta Agriculture's dairy production branch in Wetaskiwin, has announced that one more aspect of the department's long-standing Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) program has been transferred to a company known as Alberta Dairy Herd Improvement Services (ADHIS) of Edmonton.

The major portion of the privatization transfer took place in 1985 and involved both the staff and services of the DHI program. The second step, this spring, involved the transfer of the data processing unit from Westaskiwin to the ADHIS office in Edmonton.

Bristow says the second step will not have significant direct impact on the dairy industry, but will enable ADHIS to provide more efficient service to producers.

The DHI service, which has been a major dairy industry program offered by Alberta Agriculture for more than 40 years, provided technicians and specialists on a fee-for-service basis to work with dairy producers to provide milk recording and animal indentification services.

Participating farmers were provided with basic breeding and feeding information for their dairy herds and a "report card" on individual cow milk production performance, including projected production.

By analysing this information the dairy farmer was able to make decisions about improving his herd.

From the early years when the recording system involved hand-entry of information into a system of ledgers, the DHI program was transfered to Alberta Agriculture's first computerized system in the mid-1960s.

(Cont'd)

The service continued to grow and become a vital management tool for Alberta dairymen. With the DHI service under ever-increasing demands from producers, Bristow says it became impossible for a government program, faced with budget restraints, to provide the level of service required.

With the support of the Alberta dairy producers it was decided to transfer DHI to a private company. ADHIS now provides both supervised and owner/sampler milk recording services to dairy producers. Individual cow somatic cell counting, cow identification and herd summary reports are provided to assist the producer in managing his herd.

Bristow says about 40 per cent of the ADHIS operating budget is provided as a grant from Alberta Agriculture while Agriculture Canada also provides a grant in support of federal milk recording services that were turned over to ADHIS last year. The balance of costs are covered through user fees paid by the 900 Alberta producers participating in the program.

Alberta Agriculture continues to provide laboratory testing of milk samples and computer services relating to operation of the DHI program.

The branch head says the privatization move also gives the industry more flexibility to pursue improvements in dairy herd genetics which could further boost Canada's international reputation as a producer of top quality dairy breeds.

As a private company, ADHIS can recruit funds from a variety of sources and become more involved in breed testing and genetic advancement programs.

"Alberta Agriculture continues its commitment to provide up to date extension materials and dairy management advisory services relating to the use of milk recording information," says Bristow. "Seminars are organized on a local or regional basis and offer an excellent opportunity for producers to review their records with knowledgeable staff."

For more information on milk recording in Alberta, contact your local ADHIS technician or Alberta Agriculture regional dairy specialist.

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Contact: Ed Bristow or Brian Rhiness
352-1223

For immediate release

Employment program benefits farmers and students

A northeastern Alberta farm family that hired a student through a summer employment program in 1987 encourages other Alberta farmers to make use of the wage assistance plan.

Dan and Laura Keithinger of Marwayne, like the nearly 900 other Alberta farm families in 1987 who hired a student under the Summer Farm Employment Program, says it proved to be a good experience for both themselves and the student.

"We're planning to apply again this year and I would certainly encourage other farmers to apply as well," says Laura Keithinger. "Last year was the first time we hired a student under this program, and it worked out very well."

Keithinger said the program not only helped provide them with extra help on their mixed farm, but provided a 16-year-old high school student with a job and experience.

"For us, the student was involved in a lot of jobs that we just don't seem to have time for during the year," said Keithinger. "He was a good worker, willing to learn and not afraid to try something new. We showed him how to operate the tractor and other equipment and he was able to fill in on jobs if someone else was away.

"The program is an excellent idea. It is certainly good for these young people to get out on their first jobs and see what the world is like and to gain some experience."

Since its introduction 17 years ago, the annual program has found summer employment for some 31,000 students while helping farmers meet their seasonal labor requirements.

Under the program, any full-time Alberta farmer is eligible to hire a student and receive assistance in paying his or her wages. The Alberta government will pay half the employee's monthly wage, to a maximum of $300, for each month of the program. Jobs will run from July 2 to August 31.

(Cont'd)

Employment program benefits both farmers and students (cont'd)

Application forms are available through Alberta Agriculture district offices or through local Agriculture Employment Service offices. Student applicants must be at least 15 years of age, and farmers may not apply to employ family members under the program.

Applications, both from farmers and from students, will be treated on a first-come, first-served basis, and must be delivered to Agriculture Employment Service offices before May 31.

With a limit of 870 students to be placed this year anyone interested in the program should apply as soon as possible.

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Contact: Michael Kowalski
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For immediate release

Senior managers appointed at Lambco

Two officials with a provincial meat processing plant in Innisfail have been appointed to senior positions.

Gerry Kelly, has been named general manager, while Glinys Oxtoby has been named assistant general manager at Lambco.

Kelly brings a broad experience in the meat processing and marketing industry to his new position. Most recently serving as sales manager at Lambco, he also has 17 years of experience in sales, marketing and management with other meat processors.

Prior to her appointment, Oxtoby served 13 years as office manager with the company.

In announcing the appointments, Alberta Agriculture Assistant Deputy Minister Barry Mehr said both officials are well qualified.

"Gerry's keen interest in the lamb and veal industry and his commitment to Lambco serving the needs of the sheep and veal producers of Alberta, will ensure Lambco's continuance as an active and successful force in the marketplace. At the same time I know that Glinys, in her new role, will further contribute to the company's future successful operations."

Supplying a national market, Lambco - A Division of Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation is the only meat processing plant in Canada specializing in lamb and veal.

The assistant deputy minister says the company "will continue to emphasize the development of a broader range of products from these species to service an ever-evolving Canadian marketplace. The new management team is committed to maintaining Lambco's reputation of supplying Canadian consumers with the highest quality lamb and veal products."

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Contact: Barry Mehr 427-74021 or Gerry Kelly - Glinys Oxtoby 227-3386

For immediate release

MacPhail named DA in Bow Island

A University of Alberta graduate, who was born and raised in southern Alberta, has been named the new district agriculturist in Bow Island.

Ken MacPhail, who received his Bachelor of Science degree from the U of A in Edmonton in 1985 has filled the vacancy created by the resignation of Ruth McMorris late last year.

MacPhail was born in Bow Island and raised on the family irrigation farm near Medicine Hat.

His recent appointment was announced by Don Young, director of Alberta Agriculture's southern regional office.

Following graduation MacPhail worked as an assistant DA in Medicine Hat for 10 months and served as the DA in Vegreville until his appointment to Bow Island.

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Contact: Ken MacPhail
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For immediate release

Agriculture Canada develops strategic plan

Canada's agri-food research industry must develop the capacity to respond to low commodity prices, stiff international competition and unfair trade practices, says the assistant deputy minister of Agriculture Canada's research branch.

This is why Agriculture Canada last year launched a strategic plan for Canadian Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer, Dr. Art Olson told participants at the recent Alberta Agriculture's Farming for the Future Conference in Calgary.

The strategic plan for research was developed in conjunction with provincial agricultural departments and reviewed last fall by nearly every commodity and farm organization in Canada, said Olson.

Though Agriculture Canada's research branch is the foremost agri-food research organization in Canada, it can't respond to current economic pressures totally on its own, said Olson, who holds a doctorate in plant biochemistry from the University of Alberta.

"All the other research players must share in the task of supporting food production to the fullest extent possible. Clearly the job is far too complex, costly, important and demanding to be left to one organization," he said.

The strategic plan's basic goal is to improve the long-term marketability of Canadian agricultural products. To that end, the plan calls for consolidation of research programs in fewer locations, greater use of multi-disciplinary scientific teams, the maintenance of Agriculture Canada's 46 major research stations, joint ventures between Agriculture Canada and private industry, and the assurance that information and resources developed in one part of the country are readily available in another.

As an example of the latter, Olson, who was born and raised near Taber in southern Alberta, noted how funding from Alberta's Farming for the Future program enabled a federal research station in Vancouver to develop a monoclonal antibody diagnostic system to detect bacterial ring rot in harvested potatoes, now used by farmers in Atlantic Canada.

(Cont'd)

In addition, Agriculture Canada has established an industry relations office at its Ottawa headquarters to improve the transfer of new technologies to industry, said Olson, who worked with Alberta Agriculture and was an atomic research scientist before joining Agriculture Canada in 1987.

Olson also praised Farming for the Future for its support of his department's research activities.

"The program is one of the most effective drivers of agricultural research priorities in Canada," he said.

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For immediate release

Horse breeding does has profit potential

In an industry where cost of production is often twice as high as returns it is little wonder the horse breeding business gets a bad reputation, but an Alberta Agriculture specialist says in spite of averages there is room for profitability.

Doug Milligan, head of the department's horse industry branch, says there is a demand for certain classes of horses and the right manager with good production skills and business sense can make a dollar.

With horse racing and pleasure horse riding one of the largest areas of sport and recreation in Canada, the specialist says opportunities for horse breeders do exist.

There are about 50,000 horse owners in Alberta who spend about $200 million a year on sport, recreation or business related activities.

On the Canadian scene, horse racing annually draws more fans than hockey, football or baseball combined. The horse breeding industry in Canada employs about 42,000 people, and produces about 50,000 foals a year.

Milligan, speaking to a recent Alberta Agriculture conference said to be successful at horse breeding the breeder must produce good quality horses, he must have adequate financing, he needs to be efficient and he must have secure markets for the animals he produces.

"It is important to have quality horses," Milligan told the Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit Conference, "Particularly in racing there is no demand for mediocre or low quality horses, but above average horses have value."

He says the chances of raising a Secretariat or Northern Dancer are slim, but good performance horses are within a breeder's reach.

As an example, he said in the Standardbred racing business, a horse that can pace a two-minute mile is considered to be of good quality.

"As a breeder you shouldn't buy a mare who herself has not paced a two-minute mile or raised an offspring that has not paced a two-minute mile. Don't just go on appearance or buy a horse because its grandfather had a good track record, use that animal's own production ability as the guidepost."

(Cont'd)

Milligan says farmers have to approach horse breeding as an agricultural business, just like producing beef or dairy cows or grain crops.

He says because the industry has a lack of credibility and some lending institutions consider horse breeding a hobby or recreation, farmers must be well prepared to secure financing.

"It's a matter of demonstrating the business of breeding horses," says the branch head. "You need to have a business management plan with realistic goals and a good personal resume."

He said before going to the banker farmers should have at least five years of directly related horse breeding experience or be able to hire people who do. They need a sophisticated yet realistic financial plan that is not over capitalized. And they need to use quality breeding stock.

Milligan said breeders also need to strive for production efficiency. They need good agricultural skills and sound management ability. Breeder needs to pay attention to foaling percentages, good growth rates and keep overhead and input cows as low as possible.

And finally, the specialist says breeders must be able to market their horses. He says they need to know what the market wants and then produce an animal to meet that need. Breeders should not randomly produce horses and then try to find a market for them.

"There are three kinds of breeders in the country," he says. "There are new breeders, established breeders and frustrated breeders. The new breeders are getting established, they are beginning to develop production and not yet seen a profit. The established breeders know the industry, have low overhead and are good at selling."

He said the frustrated breeder has become disallusioned because he had poor quality animals, lack of financing and could not find markets.

"This is a guy who didn't have a practical plan, who was living on hopes and dreams and let his emotions get in the way of business decisions," said Milligan. "It is harmful for people to get disallusioned because they will leave the business and won't come back.

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Contact: Doug Milligan
297-6650

AGRI-NEWS

May 16, 1988

For immediate release

CANADIANA
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May 16, 1988
For immediate release

Alberta sheep industry expanding

Encouraged by good price prospects for 1988 the Alberta sheep industry continues to expand, says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

For the second year in a row Alberta producers are holding back more ewe lambs so they can expand their flocks, says Ron Gietz, an economist with the market analysis branch in Edmonton.

In his quarterly sheep and lamb situation and outlook, Gietz says prices won't be up to 1987 record levels but should remain strong through 1988.

The specialist says a recent industry survey shows Alberta sheep producers are becoming more established and expanding their flocks.

"For Alberta this past January 1, lamb retentions are up from the previous year by six per cent, representing the second year of increased lamb retentions," says Gietz. "Substantial increases in lamb retentions were also noted in the Maritimes, but elsewhere in Canada retentions were down from 1987."

He says although U.S. export opportunities may not be as good in 1988 as they were in 1987 because U.S. producers have also increased production, Alberta market prices should remain well above the breakeven point.

"Local and Canadian prices will stray only nominally from the North American trend in 1988," he says in his report. "Lambco bids as of the end of April were about $5 below last year's bids, and are likely to remain below 1987 prices for the remainder of 1988.

"A seasonal shortage in slaughter lambs in May and June should push prices slightly upward from current levels of $94 to $96 per hundredweight (cwt) approaching $100 at some point. Following this late spring peak, prices can be expected to drop fairly steadily to seasonal lows in the fall. Overall 1988 looks to be a good year for market lamb producers, but not the record year 1987 was."

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Contact: Ron Gietz
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(Because figures noted in this article are subject to change, editors and broadcasters are urged to contact the analyst before publication or airing.)

May 16, 1988
For immediate release

Herd expansion plans tempered

Alberta livestock producers should expect fairly good prices through 1988, although herd expansion plans in some sectors have been scaled down, according to an Alberta Agriculture market specialist.

Analyst Marilyn Johnson, in a second quarter report on the beef and hog industries, says producers have tempered expansion plans partly because of expected increases in production costs.

In the cattle situation and outlook Johnson says while the overall forecast for the industry this year is good, one major change since the first quarter report is the slowdown in the expected herd expansion.

She says the weather is one factor affecting cattle numbers this spring. Producers anticipate the dry weather may create pasture shortages and eliminate stock watering sources, while a poor growing season could increase the price of barley for feeder cattle.

"Weather concerns and livestock water shortages are playing a more important role than usual in the Alberta livestock industry this spring," she says in the report. "While feed supplies are more than adequate to provide supplement feed to sparse pastures, water supply shortages are not as easily remedied."

Johnson says if dry conditions continue cattle numbers will stabilize, but there isn't likely to be a major sell-off of breeding herds. For the finished market it could mean steer and heifer yearlings would be placed on feed at lighter weights, coming to market in summer and fall rather than in early 1989.

"Price forecasts are not based on possible weather disasters, but factors such as changes in feed costs and the timing of when finished cattle will be marketed should be kept in the back of one's mind as the summer progresses," she says.

The livestock analyst, with the market analysis branch, says A1 steer prices are expected to increase in the second quarter - the high demand period of the year - to between $86 and $90 per hundredweight (cwt).

(Cont'd)

Following a brief rally prices should decline during the third quarter to an average of $82 to $86 per cwt in the July-September period and rise slightly during the last quarter.

Johnson says feeder market prices have come more in line with finished markets. After coming through some extremely tight margins in the first quarter, and faced with increasing feedgrain costs, feedlot owners have dropped the prices they will pay for feeders.

"Grains analysts have indicated that barley prices in southern Alberta could approach $2 per bushel this year and this would directly impact on feeder prices," says the analyst.

"Assuming barley prices of $1.75 per bushel, 11 per cent interest rates and an $86 per cwt finished cattle market, heavy yearlings should sell between $94 to $96 per cwt. Calf prices this fall are expected to average between $115 to $120 per cwt assuming similar barley prices to those forecast."

Looking at the hog industry, Johnson says while production is expanding, it's increasing at a slower rate than earlier expected. Across Canada hog numbers are about five per cent ahead of last year, while Alberta is ahead of the national average at about nine per cent.

She says two factors slowing production are lower prices compared to 1987, and barley price increases.

"Alberta index 100 hog prices are forecast to average between $60 and $65 per cwt during the second quarter with prices gradually improving as the quarter progresses," says Johnson.

"Supply prospects suggest that the price will stay strong during the first part of the third quarter with no significant downward price movement until September and into the fourth quarter. Prices are not expected to fall below $55 for the balance of 1988, with late third quarter and fourth quarter prices averaging between $55 and $60."

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Contact: Marilyn Johnson
427-5387

(Because figures noted in this article are subject to change, editors and broadcasters are urged to contact the analyst before publication or airing.)

For immediate release

Farmers' Markets begin new season

With the first signs of spring on the Prairie, many of the more than 100 farmers' markets in Alberta are beginning a new season of operation this month.

Carol Love Rolheiser, an Alberta Agriculture specialist serving as administrator of the farmer's market program, says many of the community markets are opening in time for the bedding plant season and will continue to provide fresh produce and other agricultural products.

"Alberta market gardeners provide fresh Alberta vegetables and small fruits at farmers' markets during the summer and fall," says Love Rolheiser, a marketing services officer.

"Other agricultural products such as cheese, eggs and honey are also available and the handcrafted and home baked products are very popular with Alberta consumers."

Beginning its 14th year of the operation, the Alberta Farmers' Market Program supports markets in communities from High Level in northern Alberta to Pincher Creek in the southern part of the province.

Love Rolheiser says the farmers' market map brochure listing all markets approved by Alberta Agriculture will soon be available at market locations. The brochure lists alphabetically by name, the location, day, hours of operation and a contact phone number for Alberta farmers' markets.

"Later this month when at your favorite farmers' market ask for the 1988-89 Alberta Agriculture Farmers' Market calendar dated May 1988 to April 1989," she says. "The calendars, which should be available by the end of May, provide information on market activities, special events, recipes and helpful hints."

For more information on the farmers' market program contact Carol Love Rolheiser, Alberta Agriculture, Marketing Services, 7000-113 Street Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6 or call 427-7366.

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Contact: Carol Love Rolheiser
427-7366

Editor's Note

Attached are two stories from a series of articles promoting Alberta Agriculture's Summer Farm Employment Program.

The program which assists producers with the cost of hiring summer help has employed about 31,000 students over the last 17 years. Deadline for making application is May 31.

These articles which contain comments from farmers in Peace River and Southern Alberta will be followed next week by stories from producers in other parts of the province.

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For immediate release

Assistance program really helps when cash flow is down

In times when market conditions are poor any assistance with production costs is a true benefit, says a Peace River Region honey producer making use of Alberta Agriculture's Summer Farm Employment Program.

Grant Hicks of McLennan, who hired a student through the program in 1987 says he will be making application again this year.

"It's generally well known that honey prices have been poor the last few years, but the work still has to get done," says McLennan. "We found the Summer Farm Empolyment Program was worthwhile in providing assistance with wage costs."

Last year Hicks hired an area high school student with no experience in honey production to help during the summer "extraction" process. He said the youth had a good attitude and learned the job quickly.

"It's good to have young people around who don't have the weight of the world on their shoulders," said Hicks. "They can use the experience and the money and they create a good working environment as well."

The McLennan farmer said he encourages other producers to make use of the program.

Since its introduction 17 years ago, the annual program has found summer employment for some 31,000 students while helping farmers meet their seasonal labor requirements.

Under the program, any full-time Alberta farmer is eligible to hire a student and receive assistance in paying his or her wages. The Alberta government will pay half the employee's monthly wage, to a maximum of $300, for each month of the program. Jobs will run from July 2 to August 31.

(Cont'd)

Assistance program really helps when cash flow is down (cont'd)

Application forms are available through Alberta Agriculture district offices or through local Agriculture Employment Service offices. Student applicants must be at least 15 years of age, and farmers may not apply to employ family members under the program.

Applications, both from farmers and from students, will be treated on a first-come, first-served basis, and must be delivered to Agriculture Employment Service offices before May 31.

With a limit of 870 students to be placed this year anyone interested in the program should apply as soon as possible.

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Contact: Michael Kowalski
(403) 427-2405

Farmers learn students are good workers

Although there was some uncertainty when they applied last year, a Lethbridge area poultry farmer has nothing but praise for work provided by a student hired under a summer employment program.

Val Lowen, who along with her husband Mike, hired a 16-year-old high school student under the Alberta Agriculture Summer Farm Employment Program described the program as "terrific".

"We had never had a student working for us before and there was some apprehension about how well it would work out," said Val Lowen. "But it proved to be very successful.

"The young man we hired had no experience with a poultry operation, but he was eager to learn and became a very responsible employee that you could trust with any part of the operation."

The Lowens who operate a large chicken and turkey meat production operation said the summer student took on a lot of maintenance task they didn't have time for, as well as got involved in the daily routine of the poultry operation.

"It was a learning experience for both us," said Mrs. Lowen. "Our student had a full time job and learned something about the operation of a farm and we learned that students can make a valuable contribution to your business operation."

Since its introduction 17 years ago, the annual program has found summer employment for some 31,000 students while helping farmers meet their seasonal labor requirements.

Under the program, any full-time Alberta farmer is eligible to hire a student and receive assistance in paying his or her wages. The Alberta government will pay half the employee's monthly wage, to a maximum of $300, for each month of the program. Jobs will run from July 2 to August 31.

(Cont'd)

Assistance program really helps when cash flow is down (cont'd)

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With a limit of 870 students to be placed this year anyone interested in the program should apply as soon as possible.

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Contact: Michael Kowalski
(403) 427-2405

For immediate release

Savor Alberta Flavor promotion planned

Food buyers in many rural Alberta communities will see a new look to Alberta product displays this year, as Alberta Agriculture and food processors launch a new promotions campaign.

The Savor Alberta Flavor pilot program will be seen in 15 to 20 communities from Fort Vermilion to Cardston, in a bid to raise awareness among rural consumers about the range of products produced in Alberta.

The program is developed in co-operation with Alberta Agriculture's marketing sector, the field services sector and the Alberta Food Processors Association.

"Along with promoting better understanding of products, of course it is also hoped consumers will increase their support of Alberta-made food and beverage products," says Brenda Lennox, an associate trade director with Alberta Agriculture's Market Development Division, who is chairing the Savor Alberta Flavor steering committee.

A third objective of the program is increase support of Alberta products among the grocery retail trade.

Savor Alberta Flavor, which is a refinement of an earlier program known as the Rural Agricultural Products Promotion or RAPP, will feature in-store product demonstrations and displays this year.

The department's district home economists in the various communities will develop in-store displays in co-operation with local food retailers.

Displays which will highlight the range of Alberta products carried in local stores may include cooking demonstrations and taste tests. Alberta food processors have been invited to supply special promotional material for the displays.

The first in-store displays start in June and will continue through the year.

(Cont'd)

Plans have already been made with retailers in the following communities to host Savor Alberta Flavor displays:

Fort Vermilion, High Level, Le Crete and surrounding area, Manning, High Prairie, Cardston, Vulcan, Taber, Pincher Creek, Sherwood Park, Morinville, Legal, Bon Accord, Gibbons, Redwater, Camrose, Hanna and Vegreville, and joint projects for Rimbey/Ponoka, Wheatland/Strathmore, Cochrane/Crossfield/Beiseker.

For more information on Savor Alberta Flavor contact any Alberta Agriculture district home economist or Brenda Lennox in Edmonton at 427-4241.

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Contact: Brenda Lennox
427-4241

May 16, 1988
For immediate release

Blackfalds speaker wins provincial 4-H award

Jill Hueppelsheuser of Blackfalds is this year's champion 4-H public speaker. Her two speeches, "A Title of Honor" and "The Start of Spring" took top honors at the recent 4-H Provincial Public Speaking finals held at Stampede Park, Calgary.

Fourteen finalists from rural Alberta competed in the speak-off with Cody Church of Calgary placing second and Raymond Hoppins of Huxley placing third.

Each contestant researched the topic, "Rural Communities" for one week and prepared a four to six minute speech on a specific aspect of this topic. Shorter impromptu speeches rounded out the event.

From left: Dr. Bob Church with the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, Raymond Hoppins, Jill Hueppelsheuser, Cody Church, and Glen Werner with Alberta Agriculture.

(Cont'd)

Communication training is an area of special emphasis in the 4-H program. Competitive public speaking is one option in that emphasis.

This year's provincial event was sponsored by the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede and Alberta Agriculture.

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Contact: Anita Styba
427-4H4H

For immediate release

Feeders Day focuses on dairy production

Although the focus this year is on dairy production, farmers involved in the feeding and raising any breed of cattle will find something of interest at the annual Feeders Day at the University of Alberta farm.

A full program has been organized June 1, says Dr. John Kennelly, a professor of animal science. There will be an open house and tour of the dairy unit at the U of A farm in Edmonton, along with speakers, poster presentations and panel discussions.

The morning program will feature a discussion on protein quality for dairy cattle rations, says Kennelly. Speakers will review the latest research and provide producers with practical advice on how to save money by changing ration formulations.

As well there will also be an update on research involving the bovine growth hormone, Somatotropin - its impact on milk production and affect on the cow's reproduction capability and general health.

Following a noon barbecue featuring Holstien steak, there will be presentations on hay preservatives, grain preservatives, and forage evaluation.

"We believe anyone involved in forage production for livestock will find the day interesting and useful," says Kennelly.

Also during the afternoon three separate panels of specialists will be available to lead discussion and answer questions on feeding, herd health and reproduction.

For more information on Feeders Day, which is co-hosted by Alberta Agriculture and the University of Alberta, contact any regional dairy specialist or phone the university at 432-3232.

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Contact: Dr. John Kennelly
432-3232

For immediate release

Soil conservation theme of crop display

Use of certain crops to protect and improve soil quality will be demonstrated in Edmonton this year, as part of Alberta Agriculture's annual Crops of Alberta display.

Developed on the grounds of the department's head office on 113th Street the fourth annual showcase of grains, oilseeds and special crops will feature a soil conservation theme, says Donna Pickle project co-ordinator.

With seeding completed by mid-May, the Crops of Alberta plots will provide examples of the variety of annual forages which can be used as plowdowns or green manure, as well as demonstrate seeding of winter crops into various stubble heights.

"These are some of the methods that will be used to promote soil conservation practices that help control soil erosion problems in the province," says Pickle, a University of Alberta agriculture graduate who was born and raised on a farm near Tilley.

Along with the soil conservation theme, display plots on the one-acre site located just south of the J.G. O'Donoghue Building, at 7000 - 113 Street, will feature about 175 cereal, forage, oilseed, special and horticultural crops produced in Alberta.

"Included in the horticultural crops are a variety of herbs, new 'low-maintenance' grass, and wild rice," says Pickle. "There will also be tunnel and mulching demonstrations at the site, put on in co-operation with the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in northeast Edmonton.

"Among some of the more unusual crops sown this year will be lentils, safflower, sugarbeets, canary seed, soybean, field peas, field beans, faba beans, jerusalem artichoke and crambe."

Although the best viewing is mid-July through August when the crops are established and reaching maturing, the Crops of Alberta display is open throughout the summer and into early fall.

(Cont'd)

Visitors are welcome to take a self-guided tour of the plots which are marked with information signs, or arrange for a guided tour..

Pickle encourages anyone with ideas on crops they would like to see included in the display to call her with suggestions.

For more information or to arrange tours later this year contact Donna Pickle in Edmonton at 427-7098.

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Contact: Donna Pickle
427-7098

For immediate release

Experts suggest steps for financial health

While it is important for farmers to understand the concepts and details of financial management, a University of Illinois professor has developed a checklist for creating and maintaining good financial health.

Dr. Thomas Frey, a professor of agricultural finance, speaking to a recent Alberta Agriculture conference said one of the keys to remaining solvent is to reduce overhead costs which do not directly impact on livestock or crop production.

Frey, one of the speakers at Alberta Agriculture's Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit Conference listed 11 points for improved financial management.

"These strategies compromise a somewhat random collection of ideas that farmers can review," he said. "It is likely that nearly all operators can identify one or more suggestions for a specific way to improve performance and move toward achievement of specified financial goals."

1. Develop a system to determine cost of production per bushel or per pound.
2. Establish a market plan that is tied to your cost of production, and your financial position. Lock in profits when when available, based on market prices and cost of production.
3. Work toward "efficiency" rather than "bigness".
4. Cost reduction emphasis must prevail. Evaluate every cost outlay in terms of marginal costs and the marginal returns that can be expected; e.g. there is evidence that some farmers are using more fertilizer and chemicals than may be economical. Perhaps hired labor can be reduced through reorganizing the work activities and/or putting in longer hours by fewer people. Spend time on high priority and productive activities. Neighbors may be able to exchange labor to reduce hired labor for both, or may be able to share hired labor for more efficient use and cost sharing.

(Cont'd)

Expert suggest steps for financial health (cont'd)

5. Evaluate family living expenses to determine what might be reduced or eliminated, if necessary. Many consider family consumption outlays as necessities, when, on close scrutiny, certain items are merely "wants", e.g., as a minimum, borrow cash value at the low interest rates and pay off higher rate debt. Perhaps children will have to live at home and commute to college; perhaps fewer total cars and trucks than currently exists would be adequate. Maybe there are other potential outlays that could be postponed or cancelled.
6. Carefully evaluate the cost/benefits of potential capital outlays, compare these potential outlays with the alternative of repairs or existing capital items. Do not buy capital items just because of the impact it would have on reducing income taxes.
7. Consider sharing expensive equipment - through joint ownership or exchanging use of something you own for use of something someone else owns.
8. Consider leasing capital items, or perhaps having some operations done by custom operators. A custom operator provides both the machine and labor to operate, and the farmer isn't obligated to any future outlays.
9. Maintain adequate insurance to cover risks of events happening that might generate a financial situation which would jeopardize the business; e.g. crop insurance, property insurance.
10. Watch for ways to shift risk to others -- e.g. hedging shifts price risks, crop share rental shifts risk to the landlord.
11. Land rental arrangements may have to be adjusted, or rental land given up, if there is not a reasonable chance for profit without having to incur a risk that is too high for the given financial position.

Contact: Dr. Thomas Frey
(217) 333-1694

For immediate release

Dairy control board appoints new accountant

A new accountant has joined the Alberta Dairy Control Board to replace the recently retired Walter Shupenia. Robin Laderoute, who began April 15, brings to the board a senior level of accounting, training and experience.

She has her Certified Management Accountant (CMA) designation and gained her accounting knowledge while working in public practice with major accounting firms in the Wetaskiwin area, and most recently from her own public practice.

"We are looking forward to continuing to serve the industry in an efficient manner as a result of the new and fresh ideas Robin will bring to the board," says Lloyd Johnston, secretary manager with the dairy control board.

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Contact: Lloyd Johnston
352-1231

AGRI-NEWS

CANADIANA
JUN 13 1988

May 23, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

For immediate release

Slaughter cattle and hog producers to share $8 million in benefits

Alberta producers of slaughter cattle and hogs will receive about $8 million of a $13 million payout being made over the next few weeks through the National Tripartite Price Stabilization program.

About $6.0 million in benefits will be paid to participating Alberta producers who sold slaughter cattle, and a further $1.5 million will be paid to participating producers who sold hogs during the first quarter of 1988.

The balance of the program payout will be directed to participating producers in other Canadian provinces.

The payouts amount to $37.91 per head for slaughter cattle, and $3.14 per head for hogs marketed in Alberta between January 1 and March 31. There are about 160,000 head of slaughter cattle and 475,000 hogs enrolled in the program in Alberta.

Cheques will be in the mail to producers from the program's national headquarters in Ottawa within the next few weeks.

An Alberta Agriculture official in Edmonton says the national tripartite plan is designed to protect Canadian producers from sudden changes in the market by providing a national support price.

An insurance-type program, operated similar to the Western Grain Stabilization Program, the national tripartite price stabilization program makes a payout to participating producers if the national average price for the particular commodity falls below the support price, says Herb Lock, administrator of red meat stabilization plans in Alberta.

The term "tripartite" refers to the three partners paying equal premiums into the plan - the producer, the provincial government and the federal government.

This is the second consecutive payment made under the slaughter cattle program and the first payment made under the hog program.

(Cont'd)

Slaughter cattle and hog producers to share $8 million in benefits (cont'd)

Under the slaughter cattle option of the national price stabilization program, participating producers in Alberta, Ontario and Prince Edward Island will share a total $8 million in payouts.

The formula which averages the cost of buying calves and yearlings in both Eastern and Western Canadian markets and adds in production costs, sets the support price for slaughter cattle between January 1 and March 31 at $84.10 per hundredweight (cwt).

The national average selling price for the same period was $80.81 per cwt. That created a price deficiency for the first quarter of the year of $3.29 per cwt which when multiplied against the actual average slaughter weight of 1,152 pounds created a payout of $37.91 per head.

In comparing Alberta figures, to the national average selling price of $80.81, Lock says the Alberta Canfax weighted average steer price for the first quarter was $81.49 per cwt.

The program administrator noted there was no payout under the national feeder cattle option because the national average selling price exceeded the support price by $1.58 per cwt. The support price was pegged at $93.24 per cwt while the national average selling price for feeder cattle was $94.82 per cwt.

Looking at the hog plan, participating producers in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta will share $5 million in benefits.

Lock says the national average support price for producing a hog was calculated at $143.05 per hundred kilograms. The national average market price for hogs during the first quarter was calculated at $139.11 per hundred kilograms. That created a market price deficiency of $3.94 per hundred kilograms or $1.79 per pound.

Based on a 100 index hog weight of 175.4 pounds that represents a payout of $3.14 per hog.

In comparing Alberta figures with the national average, Lock says the average cost of producing a hog in Alberta during the first quarter of the year is estimated at $59.84 per hog compared to $75.19 per hog nationally.

(Cont'd)

Slaughter cattle and hog producers to share $8 million in benefits (cont'd)

Barley prices were one of the major factors contributing to low production costs. Alberta feeding costs including starter, grower and finisher rations, were calculated at $41.68 per hog during the first quarter, while the national average was $55.46 per hog.

Other costs which included utilities and interest on operating capital amounted to $18.15 per hog in Alberta as compared to the national average of $19.74 per head.

The Alberta Crow Benefit Offset Program is not included as a cost reduction in calculating either Alberta or national average costs of production.

"The figures clearly show that Alberta has a definite natural advantage when it comes to producing livestock," says Lock. "Some people argue that Eastern producers receive higher prices for their cattle and hogs, but the fact is that their production costs are much higher."

The program administrator says cheques to Alberta hog producers should have been mailed from Ottawa by the end of the third week in May. Slaughter cattle producers can expect their payments within eight weeks of filing their quarterly reports.

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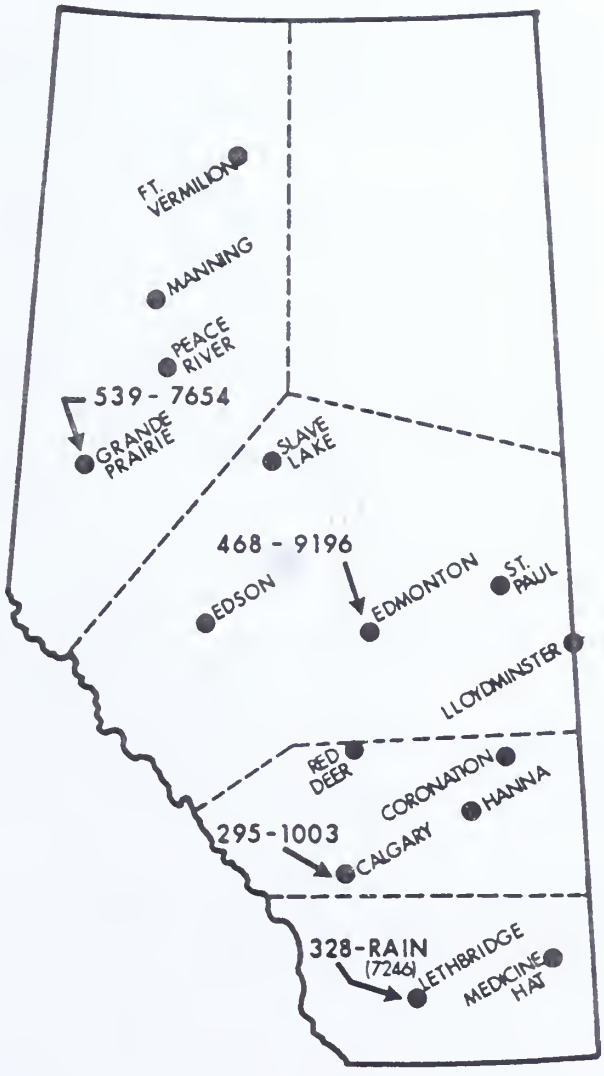
Contact: Herb Lock
422-9167

Farm Weather Line reaches across Alberta



Alberta farmers are urged to make use of the Farm Weather Line service which is operated jointly by Alberta Agriculture and Environment Canada. By calling the weather line number in their area, producers can receive the latest local weather forecast which is updated four times a day at 5:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. The lines are not toll-free and the caller will be billed the normal long distance charge if calling from outside the local area. For more information contact Alberta Agriculture's weather resource specialist, Peter Dzikowski in Edmonton at 422-4385.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

For immediate release

Red meat is nutrient dense

Nutrient density is a way of evaluating the nutritional quality of a food by comparing the amounts of nutrients it contains against the amount of energy or calories it provides.

Aileen Whitmore, provincial foods and nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, says another way of looking at nutrient density is to think in terms of your "energy budget" for the day. "Suppose, for instance, that your body size and activity pattern require an energy intake of 8.4 megajoules (MJ), or 2,000 kcal, per day," she says. "The food choices you make as you spend your energy allotment must also supply all your needs for all essential nutrients.

"When you choose foods that are low in energy but high in nutrients you will meet these needs," she says. "But if you choose foods that are high in energy but low in nutrients, you will reach your energy limit before your micronutrient needs are supplied."

In recent decades energy intakes have declined in Canada. However, no matter what your energy intake, your nutrient needs remain relatively constant.

"At very high levels of energy intake, it is not very difficult to obtain adequate amounts of all the needed nutrients," says Whitmore. "But at lower levels, food selection must be made more carefully. The foods eaten must be nutrient dense."

Whitmore says nutrient density enters the picture when we see how much good nutrition red meat has to offer for a low contribution to daily calories. In a 2,000 calorie diet, a 90 gram or single three ounce serving provides, in addition to excellent protein, measurable amounts of niacin, riboflavin, thiamin, vitamin B12, zinc and iron. Most of the iron in beef and a large share of the iron in pork, is of the

(Cont'd)

type called "heme iron", five to 10 times more available to the body than non-heme iron found in other foods. When meat is eaten along with other iron sources, it even increases the usability of non-heme iron--as long as the non-heme iron is consumed in the same meal as the meat.

"Nutrient density is another reason why today's red meat is a wise food choice for a diet designed for optimal health," says Whitmore.

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Contact: Aileen Whitemore
427-2412

For immediate release

Tax relief for quota transfers

The federal government's draft legislation of April 13, 1988 spelled relief for dairy and poultry producers, after it was announced that eligible capital property (quotas) will be eligible when sold for the lifetime capital gains exemption. Announced by federal Finance Minister Michael Wilson, the effective date for this amendment is for taxation years commencing after 1987.

"The initial tax reform measures on quota sales were indeed bad news for those producers affected," says Merle Good, a tax management specialist with Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch. "The net effect under those rules was that quota sold after 1987 would result in a 50 per cent increase in taxable income over quotas sold in 1987."

Furthermore, he says, for quotas sold after June 17, 1987 the proposals prevented spreading the sale over a period of years even if an agreement for sale of the quota calls for the payments to be made over several years.

The technical rules proposed initially in the June 18 tax reform which resulted in the 50 per cent taxable increase and the elimination of the reserve were as follows:

1. Purchase of quota will be added to the eligible capital property pool at the rate of 3/4 rather than 1/2. This means that if a farmer buys $100,000 worth of quota, $75,000 of that value can be placed in the eligible capital property pool for depreciation purposes.
2. The disposition of sale of quota will result in a 3/4 inclusion in the pool instead of 1/2.
3. The 1987 balance of a taxpayer's pool of eligible capital property will be increased by 50 per cent for 1988 with the depreciation rate being dropped from 10 per cent to seven per cent.
4. For sales of quota after June 17, 1987 the entire sale proceeds will be taxed in the year of sale, regardless of when the receipt of payment occurs, thus eliminating any claim of a reserve.

(Cont'd)

Under the draft legislation rules of April 13, 1988, the same calculations as under the June 18 proposals are required to determine taxable income. However, only the amount of quota written off (depreciation) will be recognized as income with the remaining balance being treated as a taxable capital gain eligible for the exemption.

Good says the result of this amendment to the June 18 tax reform proposals is indeed very significant and he illustrates the impact of this rule change in the following example:

Assume: Fluid Quota purchased in 1982 for $20,000
Sale price in 1988 is $200,000
Eligible capital account balance in 1987 - $5,315.
Farmer qualifies for the $500,000 capital gains exemption

	Tax Reform, Old Rules 1988	Draft Legislation New Rules 1988
Eligible Capital Account Pool Balance 5,315 x 1.5 =	7,972	7,972
Depreciation claimed to date: 4,686 x 1.0 =	4,686	4,686
Sale Proceeds: 200,000 x 75% =	150,000	150,000
Sale Proceeds - Pool Balance = Taxable Income ($150,000 - 4,686)	$142,028	*$142,028
Net Taxable Income:	$142,028	*$ 4,686

*Recaptured Depreciation = $ 4,686
*Eligible for Capital Gain Exemption = $137,342

(Cont'd)

"In order to have eligible capital property (quotas) qualify for the exemption, the owner must meet the same tests as other farm property such as land," says Good. The quota must have been used in the business of farming in Canada by the individual, spouse, child or parent, certain trusts or by a family farm corporation or partnership. As in the case of land, corporations DO NOT QUALIFY for any capital gains exemption and thus on corporate owned transfers of quotas there is no exemption to be applied against the capital gain triggered.

Where quotas were acquired prior to June 18, 1987, they would qualify if used in the business of farming in the year of sale or at least five previous years by the persons identified above. If the quota was acquired after June 17, 1987, the owners must have owned the property for a period of at least 24 months prior to sale and meet the revenue test whereby gross farm sales exceeded net off-farm income for at least two years.

"This amendment to the June 18 tax reform proposals is indeed a welcome change," says Good. "Quota will now be treated like any other depreciable asset whereby recaptured depreciation and capital gains will be triggered, depending on the amount of depreciation claimed and the sale proceeds.

"Although these changes are very complex it is important that dairy and poultry producers understand the implication of the changes in taxation regarding quota transfers," he says.

He adds that it is extremely important that an accountant be consulted prior to an intended sale of quota in order that the best tax advantage be achieved.

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Contact: Merle Good
556-4240

For immediate release

Forest tent caterpillars can be controlled

Pam North, a horticulturist with the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre, suggests that people check their deciduous trees and shrubs carefully at this time for the larvae of the forest tent caterpillar. When the tent caterpillars first emerge they are only two millimetres long and black in color.

Mature caterpillars are easily recognized by their dark brown body with a blue band along each side. They have a distinct row of white or cream colored footprint-shaped spots down their back. Fully grown caterpillars are appoximately 50 millimetres (mm) in length.

"It is important to control tent caterpillars when they are small to prevent heavy loss of foliage," says North. Twigs with clusters of caterpillars can be cut off and burned, or disposed of in plastic garbage bags.

A biological insecticide containing the bacteria Bacillus thuringiensis(Bt) will kill tent caterpillars as well as the larvae of other moths and butterflies. This product is sold under many trade names including Dipel, Thuricide and Organic Garden Spray. Caterpillars must ingest bacteria, therefore it is important to spray the foliage thoroughly, North says. To be most effective, it should be applied when the larvae are at least 1.25 centimetres in length. Bt is a very safe product and does not harm beneficial insects, birds, wildlife, pets, fish or humans.

Insecticides may be useful for controlling severe infestations. If possible, spray the caterpillars when clustered together in the morning or evening, rather than spraying the entire tree.

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The insecticides Malathion, Diazinon and Carbaryl are registered for controlling forest tent caterpillars. Do not spray fruit trees when flowering as this may kill bees and damage or kill blossoms. North stresses that label instructions should always be observed.

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Contact: Pam North
472-6043

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

Editor's Note

Attached is the last of a series of articles promoting Alberta Agriculture's Summer Farm Employment Program.

The program which assists producers with the cost of hiring summer help has employed about 31,000 students over the last 17 years. Deadline for making application is May 31.

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May 23, 1988 13

For immediate release

Summer students are reliable workers

A central Alberta farm family says they've had good success in hiring summer students for farm work under a provincial program.

Charles and Molly Osterland of R.R. 3 Ponoka says the Alberta Agriculture Summer Farm Employment Program has provided them with an extra pair of hands when the workload is greatest and at the same time provided a high school student with a job and work experience.

"We've hired students for several years," says Molly Osterland. "And using last year as an example, it has just been excellent. We hired this young man to help with odd jobs as well as regular farm work and he was terrific."

The Osterlands operate a mixed farm that includes cattle, hogs, grain and hay production. Mrs. Osterland says the student proved to be a reliable worker in all areas of the operation.

"We were away at times and we just didn't worry because we knew he was responsible and would get the job done," she says. "Whether he was mowing the lawn or operating the tractor with the large round baler he was conscientious and hard working.

"We would heartily recommend the program to any farmers needing summer help."

Since its introduction 17 years ago, the annual program has found summer employment for some 31,000 students while helping farmers meet their seasonal labor requirements.

Under the program, any full-time Alberta farmer is eligible to hire a student and receive assistance in paying his or her wages. The Alberta government will pay half the employee's monthly wage, to a maximum of $300, for each month of the program. Jobs will run from July 2 to August 31.

(Cont'd)

Summer students are reliable workers (cont'd)

Application forms are available through Alberta Agriculture district offices or through local Agriculture Employment Service offices. Student applicants must be at least 15 years of age, and farmers may not apply to employ family members under the program.

Applications, both from farmers and from students, will be treated on a first-come, first-served basis, and must be delivered to Agriculture Employment Service offices before May 31.

Once an application is approved, applicants will be notified of a safety seminar conducted by the department's Farm Safety Program, which they must attend.

With a limit of 870 students to be placed this year anyone interested in the program should apply as soon as possible.

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Contact: Michael Kowalski
(403) 427-2405

For immediate release

Stubble soil moisture map tells the story

Dry is about the simpliest way to sum up the message of the provincial stubble soil moisture map produced earlier this month by Alberta Agriculture.

Dick Heywood, the department's water management specialist in Lethbridge says as of the third week of May there still hadn't been enough precipitation to really produce any change.

"It's a very unusal situation in that it's just dry," he says. "Relatively speaking some parts of the province have better moisture than others, but nowhere are conditions really good."

Heywood says the Peace River region generally has enough moisture to germinate a crop, but in the southern parts of the province the crop that has been planted is sitting waiting for moisture.

In an odd twist some of the summerfallow cropland has less surface moisture than stubble areas. He says the snow fall that hit central and south central Alberta in March, was trapped by stubble and contributed to soil moisture.

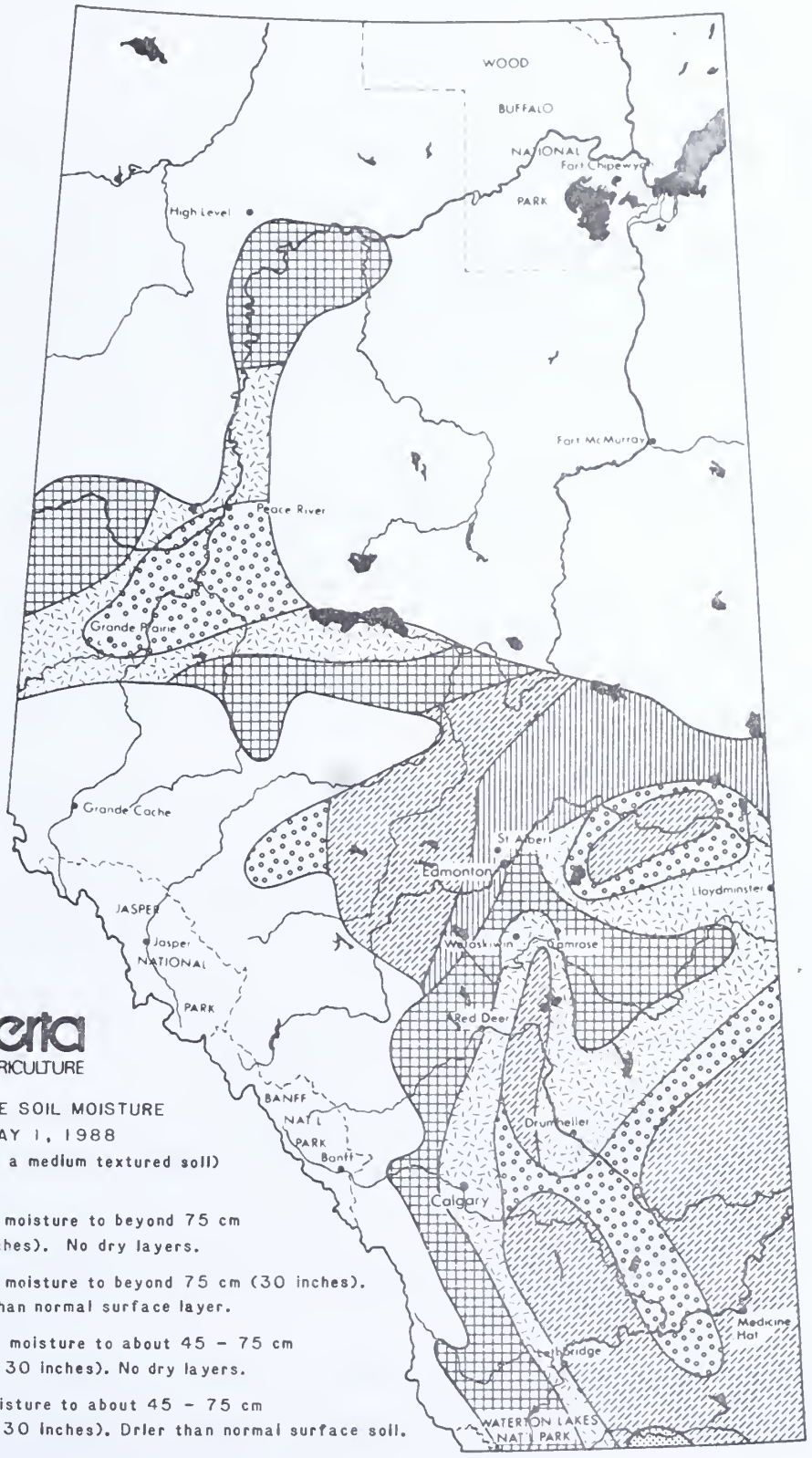
However, he says summerfallow fields generally have better subsurface moisture than stubble fields.

The provincial spring soil moisture map is based on actual soil moisture observations as of May 1, 1988, in southern and central Alberta. Because of time constraints, fall soil moistrue levels have been updated in the Peace River region from rainfall data and interviews with selected Alberta Agriculture and Agriculture Canada staff members.

Moisture level is expressed as the depth to which moist soil was found in medium textured soil. To determine the depths of moist soil for textures other than medium, the depths shown on the moisture map can be multiplied by the following factors:

Coarse (Sandy) Soils	Depth x 1.5
Fine (Clay) Soils	Depth x 0.7

(Cont'd)



Alberta
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STUBBLE SOIL MOISTURE
MAY 1, 1988
(estimated for a medium textured soil)

	HIGH	Subsoil moisture to beyond 75 cm (30 inches). No dry layers.
	HIGH	Subsoil moisture to beyond 75 cm (30 inches). Drier than normal surface layer.
	MEDIUM	Subsoil moisture to about 45 – 75 cm (18 – 30 inches). No dry layers.
	MEDIUM	Sub moisture to about 45 – 75 cm (18 – 30 inches). Drier than normal surface soil.
	LOW	Subsoil moisture to about 45 cm (18 inches). Drier than normal surface soil.
	VERY LOW	Little or no available water below 15 cm (6 inches). Drier than normal surface soil.

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

Stubble soil moisture map tells the story (cont'd)

Heywood says the map is a guide only because management and unique local conditions can affect the moisture levels obtained. Fields should be checked prior to seeding to verify their moisture conditions.

The following table gives moisture levels that must exist for successful recropping.

Satisfactory Stubble Moisture Conditions for Recropping
(Inches of Moist Soil)

Soil Category	Soil Textures	Soil Zones: Brown	Dark Brown	Other
Coarse	Loamy Sand, Sandy Loam	54" (120 cm)	36" (90 cm)	24" (60 cm)
Medium	Loam, Silt Loam, Sandy Clay Loam	36" (90 cm)	24" (60 cm)	18" (45 cm)
Fine	Clay Loam Silty Clay Loam, Clay	24" (60 cm)	18" (45 cm)	12" (30 cm)
Approximate Available Soil Water		4" (10 cm)	3" (7.5 cm)	2" (5 cm)

"These values assume that the soil has been uniformly wet by recharge from the surface of the soil," says Heywood. "In the spring of 1988, these conditions do not exist. As shown on the stubble soil moisture map legend, few areas have a wet surface soil because of the dry fall, low winter precipitation, early snow melt and low spring precipitation."

Reserves found in the soil under stubble in many areas will be better than expected, he says. Although there was little precipitation after the 1987 harvest, moisture provided by late July and early August rains was not totally consumed by the generally early maturing crops. Land with late maturing crops in 1987 may have lower reserves.

(Cont'd)

Stubble soil moisture map tells the story (cont'd)

For more information on soil moisture conditions contact the nearest Alberta Agriculture district office or any of the following:

Dick Heywood, water management specialist, Lethbridge 381-5154 or regional crop production or soils specialists in Airdrie at 948-8535; Barrhead at 674-8258; Fairview at 835-2291; Lethbridge at 381-5124; Red Deer at 340-5325; or Vermilion at 853-8109.

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Contact: Dick Heywood
381-5154

For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

IMPROVED MANAGEMENT CAN REDUCE STILLBIRTHS

With stillbirths one of the greatest causes of baby pig mortality, specialists say hog producers can take steps to reduce these losses. An article in the latest issue of Alberta Agriculture's Beef 'N' Bacon Newsletter says management can be changed and high risk sows can be identified to help curb the problem. While the average stillbirth rate is around seven per cent, many herds have more than 10 per cent. Less than five per cent stillbirths is a realistic goal. Some facts about stillbirths show that 40 per cent of sows have all the stillbirths, a high stillbirth rate in one litter means a high rate in the next litter, anemic sows and thin, old or fat sows have higher stillbirth rates, some lines within breeds and some boars produce higher stillbirth rates. Large litters have more stillbirths and very small litters (three to five pigs) have a larger percentage of stillbirths. For more information on stillbirths contact a regional swine specialist or obtain a copy of the May Beef 'N' Bacon Newsletter from the Alberta Agriculture regional office in Barrhead at 674-8248 or the regional office in Red Deer at 340-5336.

SASKATCHEWAN PLANNING FIRST RANGE TOUR

The newly formed Prairie-Parkland Chapter of the Society for Range Management will be holding its first tour June 22-24 in Saskatchewan. The tour will be headquartered at Douglas Provincial Park, on Lake Diefenbaker, (located between Saskatoon and Regina). The program includes a visit to a PFRA pasture that uses three grazing systems, an irrigated sheep pasture carrying 3,000 head on a quarter section, a discussion on range condition and trend, an afternoon on Ted Perrin's ranch at Beechy, a plant contest and other events. Both society members and non-members are welcome. For more information call Nancy Paul in North Battleford at 446-7650 or Jim Romo in Saskatoon at 966-4966.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

ALBERTA VEGETABLE PRODUCTION WORTH ABOUT $30 MILLION

Although statistics are in some cases vague it is estimated that Alberta vegetable production is worth about $30 million a year in sales, according to an Alberta Agriculture report. Last year there were about 1,900 acres of Alberta farm land growing produce for sale through market gardens and another 3,250 acres devoted to commercial vegetable production. Market gardens generated retail sales of about $5 million while commercial vegetables resulted in about $18.3 million in retail sales and about $6.5 million in wholesale sales.

BRETON PLOTS FIELD DAY JULY 8

The annual Breton Plots field day which offers Alberta farmers a chance to get a first hand look at and ask questions about soil and cropping practices has been scheduled for July 8 this year. Held at the University of Alberta demonstration plots near Breton, southwest of Leduc, the program will focus on cropping systems. The afternoon program will provide talks on different cropping rotations and allow farmers a chance to see the effects of classic rotation-fertilizer experiments and observe some new cropping and management techniques. The program will be offered rain or shine and lunch will be available. For more information on the program contact Jim Robertson at the U of A at 432-3242 or Gerald Laarhuis at 542-5368.

MELFORT PLANNING JULY 28 FIELD DAY

Agriculture Canada's research station at Melfort, Saskatchewan is planning a combined livestock, forage and crops field day July 28 this year. Beginning at 10 a.m. the day will involve tours of the research areas as well as a visit to the Pathlow pasture project. For more information on the field day, contact the station's information officer, Kirsten Jewitt at (306) 752-2776.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

FEEDERS DAY FOCUSES ON DAIRY AND FORAGE

As many as six University of Alberta researchers along with Alberta Agriculture and industry specialists will be leading the program June 1 at the 67th annual Feeders Day program held at the U of A farm in Edmonton. The latest dairy research information along with advice on getting maximum returns from forages will discussed during the day-long program which gets underway at 9:30 a.m. The program for Dairy Day has been designed to give Alberta Dairy Producers an opportunity to get first hand information on the latest dairy research in areas such as Somatotropin, bypass protein, forage quality, hay preservatives, ammoniation, milk quality and other topics. As well as tours of the facilities their will be technical presentations and expert panels, and an opportunity for producers to ask any questions about production. A noon barbecue will feature Holstein steak. For more information contact the University of Alberta, at 432-3232.

GALLOWAY BREED PROMOTED

The Alberta Galloway Association has launched a unique promotion to help increase awareness of the Galloway cattle breed among Alberta beef producers. Greg Sell, of Ardrossan, association vice-president, says the group will provide free bull semen to any commercial beef producers in Alberta wanting to try naturally polled Galloway in their herds for the first time. Galloway is one of about 24 different beef cattle breeds produced in Alberta. Sell says the breed which originates from the Scottish Highlands is best known for characteristics such as heartiness, resistance to blackflies, being an "easy keeper", having low back fat, and having a high fertility rate. Although there is a "belted" variety, the semen offered in the promotion will produce animals that are either all black or dun (a redish brown) in color. Sell says there is no particular limit on the amount of free semen available to a farmer wanting to try the breed, although preference will be given to those producers who agree to provide the association with some feedback on the calves produced. For more information contact Greg Sell, 5240 Range Road 221, Ardrossan, Alberta, T0B 0E0 or call 922-5531.

AGRI-NEWS

May 30, 1988

For immediate release

CANADIANA

JUN 17 1988

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

For immediate release

Water hauling covered by assistance program

The Alberta government has announced another $3 million has been added to its $20 million water supplies assistance program to further help Alberta farmers and rural communities cope with water shortages.

The new funds, provided in an announcement last week, will be used to cover eligible projects retroactive to January 1, 1988. As well the money will cover a new feature of the program which provides assistance to those farmers faced with water hauling costs.

Four Alberta government departments are providing funds and administration of the overall $23 million plan, originally announced April 21. The program assists with the costs of a wide range of water development and storage projects.

Alberta Agriculture is administering a dugout construction and rehabilitation program as well as a water pumping program. Alberta Environment is assisting individuals and communities with the cost of drilling water wells. Alberta Transportation and Utilities is assisting with the cost of building long-term water conveyance systems. And Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife is assisting with the cost of developing wells and other water sources on grazing reserves.

Alberta Agriculture is co-operating with Alberta Environment in administering the newest feature of the program - water hauling assistance.

Bruce Olson, co-ordinator of Alberta Agriculture's water supplies assistance programs, says farmers who have to haul water because of the extraordinary conditions can qualify for a grant.

Olson says the funds are not intended for producers who routinely haul water for livestock or domestic use, but will help those in situations where the extremely dry conditions have depleted existing water sources such as wells, dugouts and dams.

(Cont'd)

"In general terms the water hauling assistance is intended for those farmers who are out of water because of this extended dry period and are not close enough to a source to pump water into a storage facility," says Olson. "As an example it will help those farmers who hire tanker trucks to replenish a dugout."

The co-ordinator says the program will also assist producers who might use a smaller truck of their own to haul water to refill a storage facility. But this type of work, which might continue over several weeks, would be considered as one project and would be eligible for only one grant. Detailed records would be required.

Program assistance is available for all hauling completed between January 1 and December 31, 1988

Financial assistance will be provided on the lesser of:

a. one-third invoiced cost or
b. 80¢/1000 gal. loaded mile for the first five miles or portion thereof to a maximum of $2,000, or
c. 80¢/1000 gal. loaded mile for the first mile miles and 55¢/1000 gal. loaded mile in excess of the first five miles to a maximum of $2,750.

Unit mileage costs are based on the distance from the water source to the water holding facility.

Application forms for water hauling assistance should be available at all Alberta Agriculture district and regional offices by early June.

Farmers who hire a contractor to haul water need to supply an invoice and other relevant details about the work. Those producers claiming for costs using their own vehicle to haul water need to keep records of dates hauled, amount of water hauled and distance travelled.

Any applications made under the program will be subject to inspection and the program will not cover the capital cost of vehicles and pumping equipment or maintenance.

For more information on Alberta Agriculture's water supplies assistance contact any district or regional office or Bruce Olson at 427-2181.

For information on other aspects of the provincial government water supplies assistance package contact any Alberta Environment regional office; Grant Bridgeman at Alberta Transportation and Utilities at 427-3021; or Bill Irvine at Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife at 427-5256.

Contact: Bruce Olson
427-2181

Farmers respond to water assistance programs

More than 500 applications and contracts, along with many inquiries have been received by Alberta Agriculture staff as farmers make use of the provincial government's recently announced Water Supplies Assistance Program.

Since forms and applications became available in early May, producers from across the province have been seeking more information on the type of water development and storage projects covered.

Bruce Olson, co-ordinator of Alberta Agriculture's portion of the provincial program, says the use of dugout pumping equipment in just the first three weeks has been about equal to activity for all of 1987.

Alberta Agriculture is one of four government departments co-operating in providing some $23 million in assistance to farmers and rural communities during this extended dry period. Assistance coverage is retroactive to January 1, 1988.

The assistance package provides grants for construction and rehabilitation of dugouts, pumping water, hauling water, developing long-term water conveyance systems, drilling wells and developing community water systems.

Looking at just those programs administered by Alberta Agriculture, Olson says more than 300 contracts have already been completed with producers renting pumps and pipes, at reduced fees, from the department to be used for moving water into dugouts and other storage facilities.

In an ongoing program Alberta Agriculture makes high volume pumps and irrigation pipe available to producers at reduced rental rates. Because of the severe dryness and increased demand more pumps and piping have been ordered and should be available for distribution by mid-June.

Once the new equipment is received the department will have 65 trailers that carry a total of about 61 miles of irrigation pipe and 55 high volume pumps available for farmers.

The department has also mobilized a fleet of 10 trucks to deliver and pick up the pumping equipment at the farm gate.

(Cont'd)

Olson says because there is a waiting list in all areas of the province, producers should make reservations for use of the equipment as soon as possible.

Under the dugout construction and rehabilitation program, he says about 200 grant applications were received by the department in the first 18 days.

Applications for water hauling assistance will be available by early June.

Olson says some offices assisting with the administration of the program are receiving 50 to 80 telephone inquiries a day. He says calls about the programs increase as each day without rain passes.

While all areas of the province are affected by dry conditions, greatest program response so far has come from producers in the southern region headquartered in Lethbridge, the northwest region headquartered in Barrhead and the northeast region headquartered in Vermilion.

For more information on Alberta Agriculture's water supplies assistance contact any district or regional office or Bruce Olson at 427-2181.

For information on other aspects of the provincial government water supplies assistance package contact any Alberta Environment regional office; Grant Bridgeman at Alberta Transportation and Utilities at 427-3021; or Bill Irvine at Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife at 427-5256.

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Contact: Bruce Olson
427-2181

For immediate release

Farm fatalities below long-term average

The number of fatal farm accidents in Alberta continues to be well below the previous 10-year average, according to figures contained in Alberta Agriculture's 1987 Farm Fatality Report.

There were 17 fatal farm accidents in the province in 1987 with farm machinery again involved in the majority of cases, says the report which has just been released.

Although there were four more fatalities in 1987 than there were in 1986, the report shows there were 35 per cent fewer deaths last year compared to the yearly average reported from 1976 to 1986.

The Farm Fatality Report which presents statistics on accidental deaths occurring on Alberta farms last year, also outlines the circumstances related to the accidents.

The report indicates that mishaps with machinery lead the list of fatal accidents, with tractors alone claiming six lives. Other causes of fatal accidents included contact with overhead power lines, the snapping of a tow chain and drowning.

Further information on the report may be obtained from Solomon Kyeremanteng, Manager, Farm Safety Program, Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton, phone 427-2186.

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Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
427-2186

(Editor's Note: Media representatives can obtain a complete copy of the report by calling Solomon Kyeremanteng at 427-2186.)

For immediate release

District home economists mark 45th anniversary of service

In late May 1943 Esther Anderson walked into an empty office in Stettler to begin a short but vital career in establishing a service which has touched almost every Alberta farm home over the past four and a half decades.

The farm girl born and raised at Kathryn didn't realize it at the time, but she was the first of many (including her own daughter) who would follow over the years in a tradition of working with farm women and later farm families on problems ranging from canning vegetables to financial management planning.

The first day on the job was one of uncertainty for Esther Anderson, who a few years later became Mrs. Larry Williams, but she soon found her bearings as Alberta Agriculture's first permanent district home economist.

From that humble start 45 years ago, Alberta Agriculture's DHE service has grown to provide a province-wide network of 61 professionals working in district offices from Foremost to Fort Vermilion, supported by six regional home economists and eight provincial and regional specialists.

Esther Williams was the first, but the Camrose resident says one of the greatest tributes to her work was knowing that she wasn't also the last.

"One of the most important things to me was to see that the service continued and grew," said Williams in a recent interview. "I didn't know what to expect when I first started, but the response from the farming community was so encouraging that the next year four more district home economists were appointed and then more were hired after that. It was obviously a service that farm women wanted."

After completing Grade 12, the then Miss Anderson attended Calgary Normal School with plans of being a teacher. But after four years in the classroom she enrolled in the home economics program at the University of Alberta. She didn't have any particular plans for her career once university was complete, but in 1943 the Alberta department of agriculture was looking for an employee for a new position. The job required someone with a farm background, training as a teacher and a degree in home economics.

(Cont'd)

Esther Williams, right, Alberta's first permanent district home economist, and her daughter Marian Williams, look over photos from those days in 1943 when the senior Williams arrived in Stettler to launch a service which is now familiar in every farm home in Alberta. Marian followed in her mother's footsteps and also became a district home economist now stationed in Camrose. The Alberta Agriculture DHE service has just marked its 45th anniversary of serving Alberta farm families.

(Cont'd)

District home economists mark 45th anniversary of service (cont'd)

Esther Anderson applied and later that spring began work as the DHE in Stettler. Her first day on the job was May 20, 1943, the day after she graduated from the U of A.

"I remember I walked into the Department of Agriculture office in Stettler and I had no idea where to begin," she said. "The new DA hadn't arrived yet and there wasn't even a steno. There I was fresh out of university, alone in this office, the first full-time district home economist working in an area that went from Drumheller to Stettler to Camrose and east to the Saskatchewan border.

"One of the first things I did was get on the train and go to Camrose where Jack Kearns was the DA. He knew everyone and he took me under his wing and introduced me to the right people and got me started and from then on things went fine. Jack Kearns was a great help to me, and he made a great contribution to agriculture in this province."

A year after Esther Anderson was appointed the first DHE, four more were also named to posts that included Lethbridge, Calgary and Red Deer. The service continued to grow, spreading to all corners of the province by the late 1970's.

Miss Anderson left the DHE service after two years to become an instructor of foods and nutrition at the Vermilion School of Agriculture in 1945. She retired from her teaching career in 1946 when she married Larry Williams, but she never was too far from Alberta Agriculture.

Her husband served as a district agriculturist for the department in Sedgewick and Camrose until he retired in 1978 and their daughter, Marian, surprised everyone by carrying on the family tradition.

Marian Williams had always talked about being a nurse, but in the last semester of Grade 12 she decided to follow in her mother's footsteps.

After earning her degree in home economics from the University of Alberta in 1975, Marian has for the past 13 years worked as DHE in Vermillion, Olds and most recently Camrose.

While mother and daughter realize many things have changed over the last 45 years, they can also note that some things have stayed the same.

(cont'd)

District home economists mark 45th anniversary of service (cont'd)

"When I started out it was during the war years so everything was rationed," said Esther. "There were very few cars so to travel around the large district, I had to either go by train or bus or catch a ride with someone who did have a car. I had to really plan my trips in advance.

"In those first two or three years my main function was to promote the new DHE service. There had been some part-time services available to farm women but I provided the first full-time service. It was my job to reach as many women as possible and let them know I was out there."

She travelled to fairs, field days and community events and often rode with public health nurses on their home visits in an effort to meet farm women and explain the work of the DHE.

Esther says home canning and nutrition were two of the most common subjects farm women sought information about.

While Marian has a much smaller district to work in, she says the emphasis of service has broadened from the farm wife to include the farm family.

The Camrose DHE said there is still a strong interest in canning and nutrition, but she plays a greater role in helping farm families with financial planning and other areas of farm business management.

Esther said her work with 1940s girls clubs is continued today by Marian who is involved with young people through the district 4-H organization. As well Marian said she still produces a regular newsletter for district families similar to the one her mother produced for farm wives 45 years ago.

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Contact: Marian Williams
679-1210

For immediate release

Alberta oats power Derby winner

Alberta may be best known for its amber waves of wheat, but for the second year in a row, Alberta oats have gained international recognition in powering the winner of the Kentucky Derby to victory.

In early May, Winning Colors, fed on rations that included Alberta oats, covered the 1¼ mile track in Louisville Kentucky in 2:02 to become only the third filly in history to win the Kentucky Derby. Last year, Alysheba, also fed on rations that included Alberta oats, won the prestigous race.

Bob Coleman, an Alberta Agriculture horse industry specialist, says it isn't just a lot of hype that surrounds the world famous 114-year-old horse race - Alberta oats are better.

Coleman says Alberta's best oats are high quality, with a heavy bushel weight and high energy. He says the oats provide the food value horse trainers are looking for.

"Alberta produces good quality oats and the Alberta Wheat Pool has done an excellent job of marketing and letting people know we have good quality oats," says Coleman.

"Alberta oats are very popular on the West Coast racing scene, particularly in California."

He says horse owners and trainers looking for top quality rations can't do any better than buy Alberta-grown oats.

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Contact: Bob Coleman
436-9150

For immediate release

Horses may be out of shape after winter break

Performance horses that may have had a break from routine workouts for a few days or weeks over the past winter shouldn't be expected to be maintain top condition, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Show horses, just like human atnletes need to be gradually worked back into shape after a layoff, says Bob Coleman a horse specialist with the department in Edmonton.

Coleman says he has seen several recent cases where horses that are used for show or for athletic events such as cutting and jumping have developed muscle problems because they weren't in top condition for the workout.

"Some people are seeing a condition in their horses which is known as 'tying up'," says the specialist. "It's a problem that develops in horses that have had a layoff from workouts of a few days or perhaps a few months. They look to be in good shape but their muscles just aren't ready. They become stiff legged and are reluctant to move. It can sometimes become a very serious condition that can result in muscle damage."

Coleman says horses that are getting back to workouts after a layoff should have a proper balance of nutrition and exercise. Part of the problem that contributes to 'tying up' results from horses being fed too well for the amount of exercise or work they receive.

"These horses are generally well looked after and during the layoff they may have received more high energy feed than they required," he said. "The rations they receive should match the level of activity."

The specialist says even if a horse has had a break of only a week it may take two or three days to get it back to top condition. The longer the layoff the longer the conditioning period.

"If your horse is starting to show signs of 'tying up', perhaps you should re-evaluate the feeding and exercise program. Are you asking the horse to do more than he is ready to do? Perhaps he is not quite ready to progress to the next level of performance."

(Cont'd)

Coleman says owners with concerns can contact one of the Alberta Agriculture horse industry branch specialists to discuss feeding and conditioning programs.

For more information contact Bob Coleman in Edmonton at 436-9150 or Les Burwash or Doug Milligan in Calgary at 297-6650.

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Contact: Bob Coleman
436-9150

For immediate release

Be wise when working with pesticides

Alberta farmers are doing themselves and their families a favor by wearing protective clothing and following recommended safety procedures when handling pesticides, says an Albert Agriculture specialist.

Producers who take precautions are reducing the risk not only to their own health, but also reduce the risk of contaminating family members, says Bertha Eggertson, a clothing and textiles specialist with the department in Edmonton.

Eggertson says first farmers must minimize their exposure to farm chemicals and then properly handle clothing and other safety gear that could come into contact with other people.

The specialist says while more and more producers are taking necessary precautions many don't appreciate the risk when working with agricultural chemicals.

"Insecticides, herbicides, fungicides - these are all poisons intended to kill some type of agricultural pest," she says. "They have a recognized role in today's agriculture.

"But no farmer should be out there handling and inhaling these substances without wearing the recommended protective clothing and equipment. Farmers know better than to work around hazardous machinery without shields and guards in place. Some of these chemicals can be just as dangerous."

And the specialist says careless handling of contaminated clothing around family laundry or failing to clean contaminated equipment can put other family members at risk of being exposed to the chemicals as well.

Eggerston who contributed information on protective clothing for the 1988 Alberta Agriculture Crop Protection Guide "Blue Book", says farmers have a responsibility to limit chemical exposure through personal protection and careful handling of pesticides.

With pesticides able to enter the body through the skin, the mouth or by inhalation, Eggertson says farmers must take care to protect themselves from all forms of exposure.

(Con't)

Her list of recommended protective clothing and equipment is basic. She says there are no frills or unnecessary items. They all serve to protect the body and reduce exposure.

Basic protective clothing includes:

- long-sleeved shirt
- full-length trousers
- coveralls
- neoprene or unlined rubber gloves
- neoprene overboots or long rubber boots
- wide-brimmed hard hat

Particularly when mixing or handling chemicals, Eggertson says farmers should wear a waterproof or neoprene bib apron. Protective head gear should include hard hat, goggles or face shield and a respirator. The amount of equipment required depends on the toxicity of the chemical.

The goggles protect eyes against pesticide vapors, dust and splashes, while the respirator prevents inhalation of dusts, powders and sprays into the lungs.

The respirator should cover both nose and mouth and contain a charcoal cartridge to filter spray particles. The respirator should be kept clean and either the charcoal or the entire respirator, if disposable, should be replace at the first sign of chemical odor.

Along with wearing the clothing and equipment, farmers also must make sure their gear is cleaned after each wearing. Eggertson says special washing procedures need to be followed to ensure the farmer isn't reusing contaminated clothing.

For more information on protective clothing and equipment contact any Alberta Agriculture district home economist or write for the department publication, Protective Clothing for Pesticide Use (Homedex 1353-90) available from Alberta Agriculture, Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

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Contact Bertha Eggertson
427-2412

For immediate release

Turkey supplies sensitive to seasonal demand

After starting the year with a large inventory, Canadian turkey meat stocks are much improved at the end of the first quarter of 1988, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Market analyst Al Dooley says while there is no shortage of turkey meat for retail or processing purposes, improvement in the stock situation could trigger a small price increase for producers later this year.

Dooley, commenting in the first quarter Turkey Situation and Outlook, says demand seasonally increases around Thanksgiving and Christmas. A price hike of one or two cents a kilogram could occur before that time.

He says turkey is a much more seasonal commodity than other poultry products. The early Easter season was a major factor in reduction of stocks during the first quarter. If Easter had been later this year, the stock reduction probably wouldn't have appeared until the second quarter report.

On the Canadian scene, the specialist with the market analysis branch in Edmonton, says the first quarter began with turkey meat stocks about 41 per cent higher than in January 1987.

By the end of the quarter, April 1, meat stocks were only about nine per cent higher than in April 1987.

"We saw very good disappearance during the first quarter," says Dooley using a term that refers to all types of uses from retail sales to commercial processing.

"Easter falling into the first quarter certainly had an impact and we will be able to get a much more reliable reading on the state of the industry by the end of the second quarter, when the influence of Easter on the market is behind us."

He says Canadian turkey production increases of between seven and 12 per cent are expected over the summer, and will contribute to holding prices down.

(Cont'd)

The market analyst says Alberta has been out of step with the Canadian situation. The province began the quarter with lower stocks on hand than in 1987 and overall production from April into the summer is expected to be unchanged from a year ago.

Dooley says Alberta turkey meat stocks at the beginning of 1988 were 27.1 per cent below 1987 levels as processors were able to market more product out of the province. Again good usage during the early Easter season helped to further reduce stocks.

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Contact: Al Dooley
427-5382

(Because some figures used in the report are subject to change, editors and broadcasters should check with the market analyst before using.)

For immediate release

Armstrong appointed head of reference laboratories branch

Dr. Dale Armstrong has been named head of Alberta Agriculture's reference laboratories branch, in Edmonton.

His appointment was announced by Dr. Terry Church, acting director of the animal health division, and he replaces Dr. J. Pantekoek, who left in 1987 to take a position in Ottawa with Agriculture Canada.

The reference laboratories branch provides specialized and extensive laboratory services for disease diagnosis and production losses for pathologists, veterinarians and producers throughout the province.

The basic services of bacteriology and histology are provided by pathology branch regional laboratories at Lethbridge, Airdrie and Fairview but specialized services including electron microscopy, virology, toxicology, and referral bacteriology are provided by the reference laboratories branch for the entire province.

The branch also provides routine bacteriology and histology for the Edmonton pathology branch lab.

Armstrong is an Albertan, born in Vermilion and raised in Edmonton, who attended the University of Alberta, Agriculture, before enrolling in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) in Saskatoon where he obtained his doctorate of veterinary medicine in 1973.

He practised in rural western and northern Alberta until 1976 when he and his wife obtained a CUSO posting for two years in Barbados.

He entered graduate studies at WCVM when he returned and joined Alberta Agriculture's, pathology branch in 1980 after earning a master's degree in veterinary microbiology-pathology. He joined the reference laboratories in the fall in 1981 as section head of electron microscopy/histology.

Armstrong passed the qualifying exams for entry into the American College of Veterinary Pathologists in the fall of 1986. He will continue to look after the electron microscopy/histology section as he assumes his new responsibilities for the branch.

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Contact: Dr. Dale Armstrong
436-8171

AGRI-NEWS

June 6, 1988

For immediate release

CANADIANA

JUN 17 1988

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For immediate release

4-H honored by Alberta Environment

The 4-H clubs of Alberta have been recognized with an award from Alberta Environment praising their service to the environment and the people of the province.

The rural youth organization was among four recipients this year of the second annual Alberta Enviornment Awards, presented by Environment Minister Ken Kowalski at the kick-off to Environment Week '88 activities.

The award, which was established last year, is intended to recognize individuals and organizations who have made a significant contribution to the protection and improvement of Alberta's environment.

Lisa Properzi, a 4-H member from Barrhead, who is the current Premier's Award winner and Gordon Schaber, a member of the Alberta 4-H council and a volunteer 4-H adult leader, accepted the award on behalf of Alberta 4-H Clubs.

Other winners this year included the late Gordon Docken, founder of the Strathcona Industrial Association and former chairman of the Alberta Hazardous Chemicals Advisory Board; the Eastern Irrigation District for its habitat enhancement projects; and the Prairie Association for Water Management for its work in promoting the importance of water in the east central region of Alberta.

The Alberta Agriculture 4-H program which was launched in 1917 has about 7,500 members between the ages of 10 and 21 years of age, along with 2,300 volunteer leaders.

One of the most visible programs that 4-H clubs take part in, with the co-operation of Alberta Transportation and Utilities, is the annual highway clean-up campaign.

In 1986, about 8,000 4-H members, leaders and volunteer adults pitched in to pick up 65,000 bags of garbage along 5,168 miles of highway.

"This effort by the 4-H clubs has not only served to enhance the overall environment of Alberta, but also serves as a motivator to the travelling public to avoid littering," says an Alberta Environment release.

(Cont'd)

Other environment-related projects which 4-H members take part in include the pheasant raise-and-release program, nest box project, Living with Wildlife, Working with Wildlife, outdoorsman project, conservation camp, tree planting, Use Respect and the Battle Lake Environmental Plan.

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Contact: Mahlon Weir
Alberta 4-H
427-2541

Jim Dau
Alberta Environment
427-6267

For immediate release

Farmers should consider hay and pasture alternatives

Alberta Agriculture's provincial supervisor of forage crops says livestock producers should be looking at feed conservation measures and optional sources of feed if drought conditions continue.

Myron Bjorge, says although June rains can still make a big difference, hay is likely to be in short supply this year and even with good moisture it will take several weeks for pastures to recover.

"Farmers should be planning now to secure the 1988 feed supplies, but I'm not suggesting they panic," says Bjorge. "General rains soon could improve roughage supply very much. But when it does rain it will still take four to six weeks for pastures to recover.

"Hay should be harvested at the normal stage of maturity even if yields are very low. Hay doesn't grow much after the crop has headed or blossomed, even if it does rain. Because conditions are so variable, we really won't know what feed supplies will be like for sure until the fall."

The specialist with the field crops branch in Lacombe, says farmers who are short of pasture now could supplement with hay or grain and, if conditions warrant, seed emergency pasture or consider using other crops for grazing.

As well, he says salvaging roadside hay, tarping bales to reduce losses and developing rations for next winter that incorporate straw and grain winter are other options available.

Bjorge says farmers using oats or barley to supplement beef cattle on pasture should introduce the grain into the animal's diet, increasing gradually to a maximum of 10 pounds of grain per cow per day.

He says if supplementation isn't possible, producers should consider using other crops for pasture.

"Hay stands with a high grass component are a good first choice since grass is more affected by early spring drought than legumes," says Bjorge. "Also grass is a less valuable crop than hay stands containing legumes."

(Cont'd)

He recommends grazing the least drought tolerant grasses first, such as timothy before brome in Black or Grey Wooded soil regions, or brome before crested wheatgrass in Brown soil regions.

Also, older or unfertilized grass hay stands would likely be selected before new or well fertilized stands.

Bjorge says the decision about whether to turn cattle onto cereal crops versus grazing productive grass/legume or pure legume hay stands is more difficult to make.

He says because some hay stands may be more valuable than cereal crops farmers should consider several points.

1. Estimate the expected yield for each crop for each situation; 2. Estimate the value of each crop; and 3. determine the availability of grazing relative to fencing requirements, water supply and other factors.

"If insured cereals are considered for grazing, the district crop insurance office should be contacted before deciding to graze them," says Bjorge. "Cereals are best grazed when plants are between six-inches high and the flag leaf stage. Cross fencing into small paddocks also decreases forage losses due to trampling. Simple electric fencing is a good choice to minimize cost and labor."

The specialist also warns if cattle are allowed to graze legumes or mixed hay, bloat control measures are needed. Farmers should ensure they don't turn hungry cattle onto pasture and they should turn cattle into more mature stands if possible.

For more information on hay and pasture management contact any Alberta Agriculture district office, regional livestock or forage specialists or Myron Bjorge in Lacombe at 782-4641.

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Contact: Myron Bjorge
782-4641

For immediate release

Study group gives good rating to disposable coveralls

Alberta farmers involved in a 1987 study agree disposable coveralls are an inexpensive, comfortable and convenient means of gaining added protection when handling farm chemicals.

Care is still needed when working with any insecticides, herbicides or fungicides, but an Alberta Agriculture specialist says the coveralls help reduce the risk of exposure to pesticides.

Bertha Eggertson, the department's provincial clothing and textiles specialist says the 1987 study involving 325 farmers shows that disposable protective coveralls designed for pesticide use are practical.

The study, which involved farmers in 10 Alberta Agriculture districts, was a joint project organized by the University of Alberta researchers, district home economists and Eggertson. The work was funded by the Farming for the Future program.

"A positive overall attitude toward wearing a disposable protective coverall while handling pesticides was indicated from the results," says a study summary. "Most farmers intended to wear a disposable coverall the next time they applied pesticides. Most farmers held beliefs that these coveralls provide the best method of protection from pesticide handling and feel secure about pesticides while wearing them."

The disposable coveralls which are considered to be an extra layer of protection worn over regular work clothes, were rated as "very comfortable, extremely light, flexible, and breathable." The brand tested cost between $7 and $10 a pair.

Eggertson says because some coveralls did rip in the crotch area after some use, care must be taken to raise the coverall leg at the thigh when squatting or climbing to prevent the crotch from tearing. The hood must also be worn to keep the crotch at the proper height as well as protect the head from exposure.

In a new study this year about 30 farmers will be testing different designs of disposable coveralls for comfort and durability.

(Cont'd)

Study group gives good rating to disposable coveralls (cont'd)

A commercially produced coverall, already available in retail stores will be one garment tested, while two other coverall styles have been designed by a U of A graduate student.

The coveralls are designed to provide extra flexibility in the torso area, and one style has been made with a separate hood.

Eggertson says the results of the study could lead to improved commercial designs.

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Contact: Bertha Eggertson
427-2412

Disposable coveralls add layer of protection

Alberta farmers using disposable coveralls to further protect themselves from exposure to farm chemicals, should make sure they buy those brands designed for use with pesticides.

Bertha Eggertson, Alberta Agriculture's provincial clothing and textiles specialist, says two companies are producing disposable coveralls suited for pesticide use.

Details about the products are carried in a new University of Alberta publication, "Disposable Protective Coveralls for Pesticide Use", which is now available in all Alberta Agriculture district offices.

Kimberley-Clark KleenGuard Extra Protection (E.P.) coveralls and Dupont Saranex coveralls are advertised by the manufacturers as being suitable for use with pesticides, says Eggertson.

KleenGuard coveralls are white and made of non-woven, spunbonded 100 per cent polypropylene. The E.P. coveralls, which are specially treated to resist liquid penetration, cost about $7 to $10.

Saranex coveralls are made from 100 per cent spunbonded olefin (Tyvek). The garment is surfaced with a Saran film made by Dow Chemical which provides extra protection. They cost about $38.

Eggertson says even when buying disposable coveralls made for use with chemicals, farmers must remember they are only an added layer of protection from pesticides and regular work clothes must also be worn.

She says work clothing may become contaminated after a direct spill, or wear and tear from extended use of the disposables may allow chemical penetration.

All work clothes worn under disposables should be laundered according to recommend procedures for contaminated clothing. See Alberta Agriculture publication "Protective Clothing for Pesticide Use" (Homdex 1353-90) for details.

If severe pilling, rips or holes occur, the disposable coveralls should be replaced with a new one for maximum protection.

(Cont'd)

Disposable coveralls add layer of protection (cont'd)

Although manufacturers provide washing instructions with some disposables, laundering is not recommended. Washing increases the material's ability to absorb chemicals. These coveralls are disposable and are meant to be disposed of after use.

Eggertson says if the person is wearing disposable coveralls for only a short time, they can be stored outdoors or in a well-ventilated area until used again.

When squatting or climbing, raise the coverall leg at the thigh to prevent the crotch from tearing.

Disposables should not be thrown out or burned like regular garbage. They should be wrapped in a plastic garbage bag and taken to a landfill site for disposal.

For more information on disposable clothing and proper care of regular work clothes worn during pesticide application, contact any Alberta Agriculture district home economist.

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Contact: Bertha Eggertson
427-2412

For immediate release

WEAR GLOVES WHEN HANDLING CHEMICALS

With unprotected hands and wrists among areas of the body most vulnerable to chemical exposure, farmers are reminded gloves should be worn at all times when working with pesticides or spraying equipment.

Bertha Eggertson, an Alberta Agriculture clothing and textiles specialist, says while unlined neoprene gloves provide the best level of protection there are alternatives.

The specialist says some producers won't wear neoprene gloves when working with equipment because they find them too bulky.

A study involving about 30 Alberta farmers is being conducted this year to see how they respond to a lighter, nitrite glove which retails for about $6 to $7 a pair.

Both neoprene and nitrite gloves must be kept clean inside and out.

The specialist says disposable surgical gloves can also be used when working with chemicals, but they have very limited wear. She says they provide some protection against exposure, but farmers must remember to change them often.

VIDEO AVAILABLE ON PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

Farmers unsure about what safety gear is needed this spring when they head to the fields to apply pesticides on crops should take a look at an Alberta Agriculture film. "Suit Up For Safety" is an eight-minute video produced by the department which describes the type of protective clothing needed and how it is to be worn. The film discusses the need for protective clothing, lists those items that are recommended and also talks about the value of disposable protective clothing. The VHS video can be borrowed free of charge from any Alberta Agriculture district office. Along with the video, farmers should also pick up publications which discuss the safe use of chemicals and protective measures. Sources include Alberta Agriculture's Crop Protection Guide "Blue Book", Protective Clothing for Pesticide Use (Homedex 1353-90) and Disposable Protective Coveralls for Pesticide Use.

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For immediate release

Horticulture crop development specialist appointed

A long-time Alberta Agriculture employee with broad experience in microbiology and plant pathology has recently joined the staff at the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre.

Jim Letal who has worked as a laboratory specialist in Edmonton and Olds has been appointed to fill the new position of horticulture crop development specialist.

Letal's appointment was announced by George Grainger, Director at the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre (ATN&HC).

In this new post, Letal will be responsible for the seed potato, vegetable, horticulture extension and plant pathology micropropagation programs. Emphasis will be placed on research and extension programs, particularly on seed potatoes.

Letal has worked for Alberta Agriculture since 1970, initially as a microbiologist for the veterinary division and since 1972 as a plant pathologist for the plant industry division.

Until 1978 he was stationed at the O.S. Longman building in Edmonton as a staff member of the plant industry laboratory. As part of decentralization, he later moved to Olds where he was in charge of the regional crops laboratory and the Alberta Seed Potato Program.

The seed potato program has also moved its headquarters to the tree nursery and horticulture centre in northeast Edmonton.

Letal grew up on an irrigated mixed farm near Raymond, in southern Alberta. He received his bachelor of science degree in 1968 and master of science degree in 1970 from the University of Alberta.

"Jim's continued interest in horticulture, particularly seed potatoes and a broad background in plant pathology, crop production and tissue culture will be a definite asset in his new position as horticulture crop development specialist," says Grainger.

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Contact: Jim Letal
472-6043

For immediate release

Need for improved agricultural software emphasized

A new national institute has been established to help promote development of computer software to serve the agriculture industry.

At a recent conference in Edmonton the Canadian Agricultural Computing Institute (CACI) was formed with a mission to "develop an infrastructure to foster microcomputer technology for agriculture in Canada."

Objectives include:

- addressing the establishment of agricultural computer industry guidelines and standards.
- Organizing agricultural computer industry conference.
- Promoting the industry to the public.
- Encouraging education, research and product development within the agricultural computing industry.

The newly-founded CACI also formed a steering committee which includes members from the three prairie provinces, as well as Ontario and Quebec. The committee is chaired by Keith Jones of Jones Agri Comp Services of Calgary. For more information about the CACI, contact Keith Jones at (403)295-2605 or FAX 403-295-8017.

Founding the institute was just one outcome of the second annual Agricultural Management Systems - Directions and Visions (AMSDAV) conference, organized by Alberta Agriculture, the University of Alberta and Olds College.

Paul Gervais, with the department's farm business management branch in Olds, said the 1988 conference, which attracted over 115 participants and speakers from across Canada and the United States, was considered a success by all those involved.

The conference set the stage for advancements in agricultural management software design, product development and marketing, said Gervais. Better, easier-to-use and more functional agricultural software is expected to result from the two-day meeting.

(Cont'd)

Participants from across Canada gathered to hear internationally renown speakers including Denzil J. Doyle, former president of DEC Canada; Dr. Alex Guy, former deputy minister for the Saskatchewan department of science and technology; and Dr. Brian Gaines, a leader in expert systems and artificial intelligence.

Other sessions at the conference included a marketing seminar by Ross Harvey of the Parker Group, and a televideo user panel discussing user needs. Robert Fisher of IBM Canada Ltd., and Jon Sachs of Microsoft Canada Ltd. outlined new technologies impacting the product development plans of agricultural software developers.

Dr. Wayne Pfeiffer, from the University of Guelph, closed the conference with "A Vision for Agricultural Computing."

In addition to the main AMSDAV conference, participants had the opportunity to attend a special one-day "pre-conference" session featuring speakers from both government and private sector groups and organizations.

More than 85 participants took advantage of this pre-conference session to hear speakers from British Columbia to Ontario discuss current initiatives and projects relating to computers in agricultural management.

The AMSDAV '88 conference was sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Technology, Research and Telecommunications, IBM Canada Ltd., Microsoft Canada Ltd. and members of the agriculture software community.

For more information about AMSDAV '88, contact Alberta Agriculture, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0 or call (403)556-4240 or FAX 403-556-7545.

Copies of the conference proceedings are available for a nominal fee.

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Contact: Paul Gervais
556-4240

For immediate release

Plant pathologist joins Alberta Agriculture

A specialist in plant pathology has joined the staff of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in northeast Edmonton.

Piara Bains, a graduate of the Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana, India, who has also studied at the University of Alberta, has joined the department as micropropagation plant pathologist.

In making the announcement, George Grainger, director of the tree nursery and horticulture centre, says Bains will be concentrating on the development of disease-testing procedures for micropropagated crops.

He will provide disease-testing support for the Alberta Seed Potato Program and for other tissue-cultured crops such as saskatoons, geraniums and chrysanthemums.

Bains obtained his bachelor of science in agriculture and master of science in horticulture in India. He moved to Canada and received a master of science in plant pathology from the U of A and will be completing his PhD in plant pathology this summer.

The specialist will be working closely with all staff at the northeast Edmonton centre in developing plant pathology testing programs for all micropropagated crops.

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Contact: Piara Bains
472-6043

Chicken markets held down by large inventory

Large stocks of chicken both in Alberta and across Canada are expected to keep prices to producers down through the year, says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

Al Dooley, in his quarterly report on the industry says although "disappearance", which means retail sales and commercial use of chicken, has been good during the first quarter of 1988, there is still a "burdensome" supply of chicken on hand.

In the recently released Chicken Situation and Outlook, Dooley says Alberta began the year with about 3.3 million kilograms of chicken in stock, which was 73 per cent greater than a year earlier.

Cornish hen and particularly, broiler stocks, accounted for almost 90 per cent of the total with the balance being roasters.

"The Alberta situation closely paralleled that of the nation as a whole," says the dairy and poultry market specialist. "The province had higher production, good disappearance, but still large stock levels by quarter's end.

"Relative to 1987, prices this year will remain depressed. Lower production in the second quarter and the approach of the seasonally high consumption summer season will improve price prospects in the coming months. Producer prices in Alberta were increased three cents per kilogram in late May in response to an improved fresh market."

He says like Alberta, the most notable feature of the Canadian chicken market through the first quarter of 1988 was the large stock situation.

Canadian chicken stocks at the beginning of the year were 69.4 per cent greater than a year earlier on light-weight birds and more than three times greater than a year before on roasters.

"First quarter production is estimated at 131.1 million kilograms, well above production in the first three months of 1987. Usage also registered a significant increase from last year. Disappearance also was very good over the quarter, but insufficient to significantly improve price prospects in the short term."

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Contact: Al Dooley
427-5382

For immediate release

Heavy horse program among summer events

The Alberta Heavy Horse Improvement Program, being held for the first time in Edmonton this year, is one of several events being staged this summer for the benefit of horse owners, trainers and spectators.

The heavy horse improvement program, which has been held in central or southern Alberta in the past, will be staged July 21 at the Northlands Coliseum as part of the Klondike Days Horse Extravaganza July 21 to 30.

Bob Coleman, an Alberta Agriculture horse specialist in Edmonton, says three draft horse breeds will be featured at the event. Deadline for entries is June 20.

Percherons, Clydesdales and Belgians will be shown in three improvement program classes which include, a yearling class, a produce-of-dam class and a performance class.

The performance class, will involve single three or four-year-old horses driving through a prescribed course.

For information or registration forms contact the horse industry branch Calgary office at 297-6650 or Edmonton office at 427-8905.

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Contact: Bob Coleman 427-8905
Les Burwash 297-6650

For immediate release

New manager to assist Alberta food processors

A former dairy industry official has been appointed head of Alberta Agriculture's processed food development section to assist food processors in marketing their products.

Ron Pettitt, former general manager of the Edmonton branch of Palm Dairies, assumed his new position June 1. His appointment was announced by Lou Normand, head of the agri-food and processing development branch.

"Ron and his staff are the key department representatives with the Alberta processed food industry and through strong relationships with the private sector, they encourage and assist the industry in responding to identified market opportunities," says Normand.

"The section also provides direction and implementation of industry development by encouraging new investments and expansion of existing companies through new product development, product diversification and technology adoption."

Normand says the new manager's experience with Palm Dairies has provided him with a broad knowledge of many facets of the food industry, including the production, distribution, marketing and sale of a wide variety of dairy and beverage products.

Prior to his years with Palm, Pettitt was chief of the dairy section of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture and at one time worked with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

He holds a master of science degree in food science and bachelor of science degree in dairy science from the University of Manitoba. He is also a member of several industry associations.

"Because of his broad industry experience and government background, Mr. Pettitt will be a strong and valuable addition to our team," says Normand.

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Contact: Lou Normand
427-7366

For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

EQUINE EVENTS PLANNED FOR SEPTEMBER

Several events of interest to Alberta horse enthusiasts have been planned for this September. Equifair will be held at Spruce Meadows near Calgary as part of the annual international show jumping competition. Running September 7 to 11, Equifair will feature an equine trade show, the Alberta Breeds for the World and Master's show jumping. Later in September two weekends will be devoted to light horse improvement programs in Red Deer. September 17 and 18, eight breeds will be featured at the horse improvement program including Arabian, part-bred Arabian, walking horses, saddlebreds, Morgans, sport horses, Pintos and Welsh ponies. The following weekend, September 24 and 25, the improvement program will feature three breeds - Quarter Horses, Appaloosas and Paints. Both weekends of horse improvement programs will be held at the Red Deer Westerner exhibition grounds.

SEMINAR DEALS WITH POULTRY LOSSES IN HOT WEATHER

Alberta poultry producers who have felt the frustration of having birds die on extremely hot days should take part in a one-day seminar in Strathmore in mid-July on "Managing Poultry in Hot Weather." Organized by the engineering and poultry branches of Alberta Agriculture the seminar will feature several speakers. Dr. Ralph Ernst of the University of California, Davis, will talk about ways to minimize heat stress on the flock. Rich Smith and Wayne Winchell with Alberta Agriculture's engineering branch will review building design, insulation and fogging systems. Rod Chernos, a department poultry specialist will put losses in perspective and try and associate dollars and cents to the problem. Registration forms are available from Alberta Agriculture district offices or by contacting Rod Chernos, Alberta Agriculture, Bag Service #1, Airdrie, Alberta, T4B 2C1. Pre-registration before July 1 is requested.

(Cont'd)

BEEKEEPERS INVITED TO BEAVERLODGE FIELD DAY

Discussions about the Varroa mite problem and advice on overwintering bees will be two of the topics covered in Beaverlodge later this week at the annual beekeepers field day sponsored by the Agriculture Canada Research Station. Beginning at 10 a.m. and running to about 5 p.m. the June 10 field day will feature displays, demonstrations and several lectures. British Columbia speakers will talk about overwintering bees, while Dr. Don Nelson will review the Varroa mite survey and action plan. Along with updates on association activities, Paul Van Westendorp and Doug McCutcheon, Alberta and B.C. provincial apiculture specialists, respectively, will also provide provincial reports. A noon barbecue will be provided.

TILLAGE DAY PLANNED AT LAKELAND

The latest in seeding and tillage technology will be demonstrated June 28 for Alberta farmers at Tillage Day 1988 at Lakeland College in Vermilion. Technical seminars and displays will be provided at the event which is a joint project of Lakeland College, Alberta Agriculture, the Vermilion Agricultural Society and local implement dealers. Displays will include a wide range of tillage, soil finishing, fertilizer application and seeding equipment, while seminars will address topics such as conservation tillage, and challenges of farm machinery design. There will be field demonstrations of tillage and seeding equipment in the afternoon. A special feature of Tillage Day will be a display and demonstration of heritage machinery to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Lakeland College. For more information contact the college at 853-8400 or any Alberta Agriculture district office.

FEEDLOT SCHOOL SET FOR JUNE 23

Pre-registration is requested for the annual Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association feedlot school being held this year June 23 and 24 at Olds College. Several speakers have been booked for the two-day event designed to be of value to both pencheckers and managers. For more information or to register contact the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association, #236, 2116 -27th Ave. N.E., Calgary, T2E 7A6 or phone 250-2509.

(Cont'd)

NEW IDEAS FOR BARBECUED CHICKEN

If you're tired of having chicken the same old way, the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency has just published a new free cookbook on 18 ways to barbecue chicken. "All Fired Up About Chicken" includes a variety of simple and fancy dishes that give chicken a new look and taste. For a free copy of the book write to the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency, Recipe Book Offer, 400 Dalhousie Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 9J9, or the Alberta Chicken Producers' Marketing Board, Suite 101, 11826-100 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 0K3.

TIME TO REGISTER FOR SASKATCHEWAN RANGE TOUR

There is still time to register for the first summer range tour sponsored by Saskatchewan's newly formed Prairie-Parkland Chapter of the Society for Range Management. The June 22-24 tour will be headquartered at Douglas Provincial Park, on Lake Diefenbaker, (located between Saskatoon and Regina). The program includes a visit to a PFRA pasture that uses three grazing systems, an irrigated sheep pasture carrying 3,000 head on a quarter section, a discussion on range condition and trend, an afternoon on Ted Perrin's ranch at Beechy, a plant contest and other events. Both society members and non-members are welcome. For more information call Nancy Paul in North Battleford at 446-7650 or Jim Romo in Saskatoon at 966-4966.

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For immediate release

Farmers urged to revise beef feeding and breeding program

Alberta cattlemen may have to disregard the usual rule book when it comes to managing the feeding and breeding of their beef cattle this summer.

Two specialists with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton say because of drought conditions, which have reduced both the quantity and quality of forage available, farmers will have to develop a revised management program for their herds.

Dale Engstrom, a ruminant nutritionist and Dr. Laura Rutter a reproductive physiologist, say until normal rainfall and adequate plant growth returns, farmers will have to use new strategies this year to maximize production and minimize losses.

"Abundant green grass is the ideal feed for milk production and rebreeding in the beef herd," says Engstrom. "Unfortunately many areas of Alberta do not have abundant green grass for their herds this year. In order to keep cows milking and to permit rebreeding some different feeding programs will have to be implemented."

Rutter adds, "without the normal abundance of grass the breeding season will have to be managed more closely. If a reasonable pregnancy rate and length of calving season is to be maintained, extra feed and management will be required. Several reproductive techniques can be used to improve cycling and rebreeding of problem cows."

To assist in developing a "dry June" management program the specialists suggest some options for the various groups of cattle.

1. Early Calved Cows

Cows that calve in January, February or March are usually bred before green grass is plentiful and producers have likely managed their breeding and feeding programs in the normal manner.

If drought conditions prevail producers with these types of cows should consider the benefits of weaning the calves earlier than normal. A three to four-month-old early weaned calf, if fed properly, is capable of growing as fast as one left to suckle the cow.

(Cont'd)

Dry cows are more easily maintained on poor-quality feeds than are suckled cows and the overall use of feed resources is more efficient with an early weaning system.

If cows and calves are to be left together creep feeding the calves should be considered. Access to a palatable, nutritious creep ration will allow calves to gain at acceptable rates even if forage and milk are in short supply. Supplemental feeding of the entire herd is a third option to be considered.

If pasture is available but of poor quality perhaps a grain mix or range cubes fed at five to 10 pounds per cow per day is the best option. If pasture is not available a complete ration including roughage and concentrates is required.

II. Recently Calved Cows

Many cows calving since April 1st will still be open and rebreeding is scheduled for the next 4-6 weeks. This group is of the highest concern since they are in early lactation as well. For management purposes these cows should be considered in the following groups:

A. Yearling Heifers

Ideally yearling heifers should be 60 to 65 per cent of their mature weight at the time of breeding. Feeding to permit a growth rate of 1.0-1.5 pounds per day before and after breeding is usually adequate for most breeds. Complete or supplemental feeding should be done to accommodate this amount of growth. Insufficient growth after breeding will result in an increased incidence of calving difficulty and will likely impair the heifers ability to rebreed next year.

B. Cows Cycling Normally

For cows calving before mid-April and maintaining a body condition score of 2.5 or better, normal cyclic activity should have been observed before pasture turn-out in June.

Similarly, first-calf heifers calving before April 1 and maintaining a body condition score of 3.0 or better should also be cycling normally by now.

(Cont'd)

Cows and heifers which were cycling normally before pasture turn-out will likely NOT have a breeding problem UNLESS feeding conditions are so marginal that the females loose more than 100 pounds in about a three-week period (more than one-half body condition score).

Research has shown that females, once they start cycling, would need to be literally starved before they quit cycling. However, conception rate may be lower in females losing body conditon due to lower egg fertilization rates and/or increased early death of fertilized eggs.

Complete feeding, supplemental feeding and creep feeding should be considered for this group to avoid excessive weight loss in the cows and to promote normal growth of the calves.

C. Problem Cows Not Cycling

For females calving late this year, i.e. cows who are less than 50 days and first-calvers who are less than 70 days after calving at the start of the breeding season, and for females calving in less than adequate body condition, damaging effects of poor pasture condition are MOST LIKELY. Body condition loss in females that are not yet cycling will markedly extend the interval from calving to heat. These females are the ones who need help if they are to become pregnant within a reasonable time. If feed shortages occur, consider selling these cows first.

If thin (less than 2.5 condition score for cows or 3.0 condition score for first calvers) these females should be fed to gain weight. This means some grain feeding as well a good quality forage being available free choice. In addition to proper feeding there are several techniques that can be used to get problem cows to cycle and rebreed.

1. Temporary Calf Removal

a. Use for cows and first-calvers that are more than three weeks after calving and in adequate body condition (2.5 for cows, 3.0 for first-calvers).
b. Separate calves from cows for a full 48 hours; provide clean water, shelter and creep for calves.
c. Acts to stimulate ovarian activity and induce ovulation in females that are not yet cycling and may enhance conception rates in cows already cycling.
d. NOT recommended for use when calves are sick, unthrifty or weak.

(Cont'd)

2. Once-Daily Suckling
   a. Use for cows and first-calvers that are more than three weeks after calving.
   b. Separate cows from calves, allowing only one-30 to 60 minute suckling episode each day until the cow comes into heat.
   c. Acts to stimulate ovarian activity and may be used in combination with a high-energy diet to get thin cows going.
   d. Producer must have adequate facilities and personnel to avoid frustration and injury during cow movement to and from suckling pen.
3. Progestins Synchro-mate B)
   a. Use in females that are more than three weeks after calving and in adequate body condition.
   b. Administer according to label instructions for Synchro-mate B.
   c. Acts to stimulate ovarian activity and will induce heat in females that are not yet cycling; will also synchronize estrus in females that are already cycling.
   d. DO NOT administer to bulls, but Synchro-mate B without the estrogen injection will not abort cows that are already pregnant.

III. Breeding Bulls

Like yearling heifers, bulls are probably the other group that is of least concern. Without the stress of lactation, body weight loss prior to the breeding season has probably been minimal. Since bulls will be run with the cows it is not feasible to develop different feeding programs for them. However, if weight loss is excessive (greater than 30-40 pounds per week) during the early part of the breeding season be prepared to rotate a "fresh" bull into the herd.

For details on feeding and reproductive strategies contact a regional livestock specialist or Laura Rutter at 427-5304 or Dale Engstrom at 427-6361.

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Contact: Laura Rutter - 427-5304
427-5304

Dale Engstrom - 427-6361
427-6361 - 436-9150

For immediate release

Check ponds and lakes for blue-green algae hazard

Although in some parts of Alberta this spring there isn't a lot of standing water, farmers should be alert to the hazard of blue-green algae on ponds and lakes which can be harmful to livestock and humans alike.

The toxins, which develop as the algae dies, are not only harmful if ingested through drinking but also through skin contact, says Dr. Roy Smith an Alberta Agriculture toxicology lab scientist in Edmonton.

"Toxic algae can be harmful to animals which drink the water in which they occur, but they can also cause problems from skin absorption and thus they might present a hazard to swimmers, water skiers, sail board riders, and other recreationists," says Smith. "Particular care should be taken when the water contains algae with a distinct blue-green color. Animals wading in such water are also at risk."

Although there are several species of algae, all freshwater algae which are toxic are blue-green algae, says Smith .

"Several cases of wildlife and of farm animal loss have been reported in Alberta in recent decades, and in every case eye witnesses have testified as to the very distinct blue-green color, tint or sheen on the water or on the algae themselves," he says. "Bodies of water which have the green coloration of normal plants like grass or pond dwelling plants like duckweed are most unlikely to be toxic regardless of how thick the scum is."

The only species of blue-green algae actually known to have caused farm or domestic animal poisonings in either Alberta or Saskatchewan are Anabaena flos-aquae and Microcystis aeruginosa. Both of these algae are capable of producing more than one toxin worldwide, but in Alberta the overwhelming number of Anabaena cases involve Anatoxin A and the overwhelming number of Microcystis cases involve Microcystin A.

Because these poisons are released on the death of the algae, water which has been treated with copper or other chemical to kill the algae may be especially dangerous for the first 24 hours after treatment.

(Cont'd)

"The toxicology lab at Alberta Agriculture has the capability not only of microscopically identifying either Anabaena or Mycrocystis algae, but also of chemically analysing for the two named toxins," says Smith. "Anatoxin A is an alkaloid which kills very quickly and analysis for this poison takes only a few hours. Microcystin A is a peptide which takes several hours to kill and at least two days to analyse for, however, strong evidence of Microcystin A poisoning will be found upon the autopsy of an animal which has died from this particular cause."

The lab scientist says water samples for analysis should be gathered in two plastic bottles, one of which should be frozen as soon as possible after collection and the other should be kept at around 4 degrees Celsius in a normal refrigerator until shipped. Ideally, the frozen sample should arrive still frozen at the laboratory.

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Contact: Dr. Roy Smith
427-3981

For immediate release

Poison plants can be a threat to livestock

With dry conditions forcing cattle to search out any kind of food that even looks green this year, farmers should check pastures for noxious weeds that may cause illness and death in livestock, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Dr. Roy Smith, a toxicology lab scientist in Edmonton, says because of the poor pasture conditions in some parts of the province this year, cattle may be forced to concentrate in areas where poisonous plants are commonly found.

"Every year the toxicology laboratory finds evidence of plant poisons in connection with multiple losses of cattle," says Smith. "Only a handful of plant species are involved but these occur over and over again. Three of the more common plants that are very dangerous to cattle include water hemlock, larkspur and death camas."

The specialist has provided a brief description of each plant:

Water hemlock, number one on the list of plants dangerous to cattle, is responsible for more cattle losses than any other plant in Alberta. Water hemlock, as the name implies, likes water and grows on the banks of creeks, sloughs and other low areas. Water hemlock grows to a height of several feet and has toothed leaflets. The roots are the most toxic part. If a suspect plant is pulled out of the ground and the root cut open a bright yellow oil is found. The root is hollow with several chambers. Because there are other plants that closely resemble water hemlock, a sample plant should be send for analysis, particularly if there have been livestock losses.

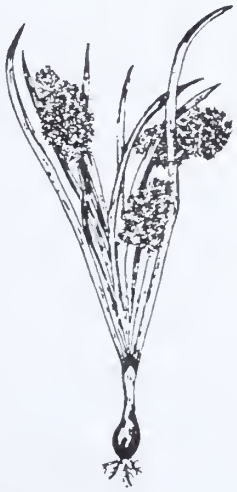
WATER HEMLOCK

(Cont'd)

Larkspur is the number two plant for cattlemen to be on the lookout for. Larkspurs derive their name from the normally blue-colored flowers that resemble the foot of a larkspur with a distinct spur on the back of the flower. Not all larkspurs are dangerous. All cases of poisoning in Western Canada involved only two species of larkspur both of which contain a specific alkaloid called MLA for short. Although larkspurs should never be fed to cattle, only those containing MLA seem to be dangerous in a pasture where ample alternative feed is present. If there are any concerns about larkspurs, sample plants can be analysed for the presence of MLA.

LARKSPUR

The death camas which has grass-like leaves and an onion-like bulb grows in meadows and on hillsides. The white camas is very similar in appearance to the death camas, but the white camas is more likely to be found in a very wet environment and it is much less dangerous. Again, the white camas should never be deliberately fed to cattle, but only the death camas is dangerous in pastures with adequate alternate feed. The alkaloids in the death camas are different than those in the white camas. Sample plants can be analysed to determine if the dangerous alkaloids are present.



DEATH CAMAS

(Cont'd)

"From time to time other plants are involved in poisoning cases," says Smith. "These include lupines, stinkweed and monkshoods. Large amounts of these plants must be eaten to cause death. A dead cow can put a producer $1,000 out of pocket - when in doubt it would make economic sense to have suspect plants checked."

For further information on toxic plants or to have sample plants analysed contact the Alberta Agriculture, Toxicology Laboratory, 6th Floor, O.S. Longman Building, 6909 - 116 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 4P2, or call Dr. Roy Smith at 427-3981.

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Contact: Dr. Roy Smith
427-3981

For immediate release

Don't be too quick to cut breeding season

Cattlemen following advise to shorten the calving season, shouldn't try to do it all in one year by pulling the bulls out of the breeding pasture early, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Ross Gould, head of the animal management section, says suddenly cutting the breeding season could be an expensive move that might take a farmer years from which to recover.

He says farmers should set their sights on a shorter calving season, but then make management changes over two or three years to ease toward that objective.

"A farmer that has in the past had a 120-day calving season, probably, for economic reasons, can't suddenly jump to a 63-day season," says Gould. "By pulling the bulls out of the breeding pasture after two or three heat cycles, the farmer is probably going to end up with about 20 per cent of his herd open, which means the calf crop is going to be reduced by 20 per cent."

The management specialist says the first step toward shortening the calving season is to make sure cows have good nutrition and are in proper condition for breeding. And then, producers should follow a culling program to cut the late calvers from the herd.

"The real objective is to have as many calves born as early as possible in the calving season," says Gould. "In most cases, it is probably better to put the first emphasis on managing the herd to ensure the greatest proportion of cows are cycling and fertile at the start of the breeding season.

"Proper nutrition before and after calving and management directed to avoiding calving difficulty and health problems, should receive high priority."

Gould says even if the herd with a 120-day calving season, is in good condition when the breeding season begins, the latest calving cows have not yet had time to recover and begin proper heat cycle in time for the shortened breeding season.

(Cont'd)

Along with keeping the cow herd in condition, Gould says it is equally important to make sure that replacement heifers are properly developed and that bulls are both fertile and "willing and able" to serve the cows in the herd.

The best indication of whether the breeding season can be shortened is by the number of calves born in the first 63 days of the calving season.

Gould says if a farmers sees that only about 75 per cent of his calves are born in the first 63 days of the calving season, it is still too early to dramatically reduce the breeding season.

But if 95 per cent of calves are born in the first 63 days of the calving season there are probably no real losses to be sustained by reducing the breeding season. In any herd, he says there are always a few cows each year that will have trouble conceiving and end up being culled.

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Contact: Ross Gould
427-5335

For Immediate Release

Farmers' Advocate appoints executive assistant

Provincial Farmers' Advocate Cliff Downey has announced the appointment of Paul Vasseur as his executive assistant.

Vasseur, a grain farmer in the Three Hills area for 24 years, now lives in Edmonton and has operated his own land consulting business for the past 10 years.

During that time, Vasseur has been active on a number of boards and committees, including the Three Hills Surface Rights Group, which he served as Chairman, and the Three Hills and District Seed Cleaning Plant board, which he served as Director. At the time of his acceptance of the executive assistant's position, Vasseur was vice president of the Alberta Surface Rights Federation.

As executive assistant to the Farmers' Advocate, Vasseur will aid Downey in all duties of the office. He will help the Farmers' Advocate respond to the concerns of Alberta's farm families, resolve problems wherever possible and provide needed information on agricultural issues.

In making the announcement, Downey stated, "Paul Vasseur's experience in farming, in agribusiness and in the field of surface rights will be a tremendous addition to the Office of the Farmers' Advocate. I look forward to working with Paul in helping farmers and ranchers deal with their concerns, and helping to make them better aware of how they and their careers are affected by provincial legislation."

Downey assumed the duties of Farmers' Advocate on June 1, 1988.

The Office of the Farmers' Advocate was established in 1973, and is located in Edmonton, at the J.G. O'Donoghue Building.

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Contact: Cliff Downey
427-2433

For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

DAIRY CONFERENCE IN EDMONTON

Leading dairy industry researchers and scientists from around the world will be in Edmonton later this month for the 83rd annual meeting of the American Dairy Science Association at the University of Alberta. Hundreds of paper presentations and poster sessions on a wide range of subjects concerning dairy cattle production or processing of dairy foods will be made during the June 26 to 29 conference. Special symposiums during the conference will include the supply management system in Canada, the genetics of disease resistance, reproductive immunology, and instrumental methods for measuring milk components. There will be a pre-conference workshop June 25 and 26 dealing with genetic research. For more information or to register contact Dr. John Kennelly or Bob Freidland, at the University of Alberta at 432-2133.

PLOWING MATCH SET FOR JUNE 24-26

The 18th annual provincial plowing match will be held in Wanham, in the central Peace River region June 24 to 26. A wide range of events, competitions and exhibits have been planned for the three-day event being held at the Wanham Sports Grounds. Along with senior and junior Alberta championship plowing events there will be horse plowing and pulling, tractor pulling, antique tractor plowing and pulling, bag throwing, tug of war, bale stacking, log sawing, belt setting, stooking, post driving and hawg calling competitions. Arena dances have been planned for June 24 and 25 evenings and a barbecue supper will also be held June 25. The wrap up banquet and plowing match awards will be held June 26. Tickets, available at the gate are Adults, $5, Students and Seniors $3 and children under 12 are free.

(Cont'd)

CONSERVATION FEATURED IN WARNER ASB TOUR

Soil and water conservation methods will be featured during the Warner County Agricultural Service Board tour June 18. Beginning at 9 a.m. the tour will take a look at zero till, fertilizer banding, and chem fallow research plots, alfalfa varietal and fertilizer trials, solonetzic and sandy soil management, and the Tyrrell-Rush Lake Wetlands for Tomorrow Project. Busses will leave from the Warner County offices at about 8:30 a.m. Lunch will be served at Goldsprings Park at noon and an evening barbecue is planned at the Warner Lions Park in Warner at 5:30 p.m. Cost of tour is $10 in advance and $15 the day of the tour. Anyone planning to attend is asked to contact the County of Warner at 642-3635 as soon as possible to reserve their seat on the bus. For more information contact the county office or the Alberta Agriculture district office at 642-3884.

RAM TEST STATION SALE JULY 2

Alberta sheep producers planning to buy new breeding stock should plan to attend the 14th annual Alberta Ram Test Station sale, July 2 at the Olds College Livestock Pavilion, in Olds. A record number of top-quality performance tested rams will be offered for sale. As many as 90 rams representing Suffolks, Rambouillets, Dorsets, Polypays, Hampshires and Romanovs breeds will be sold. Rams will be available for viewing at 10:30 a.m. with the sale beginning at 1 p.m. Alberta Agriculture sheep specialist, Cathy Gallivan in Airdrie, says all rams sold will be above station average for average daily gain and must pass a rigorous physical cull for teeth, testicles and legs to be in this sale. For more information contact Cathy Gallivan at 948-8517.

ALBERTA WOMEN'S WEEK SET FOR JULY 18 - 20

Alberta farm women are urged to make plans now to attend the annual Alberta Women's Week program at Olds College, July 18 to 20. "A Step Ahead...Options and Opportunities For You, The Farm Woman" is the theme of this year's week. Jolene Brown, a human resource consultant from West Branch, Iowa will be the keynote speaker encouraging women to develop the skills to step out, and try new and different challenges. For more information or to register contact any Alberta Agriculture district office.

(Cont'd)

4-H MEMBERS TO ATTEND INDIANA CONFERENCE

Four Alberta 4-H members will experience the highlight of their 4-H careers, June 19 as they leave Calgary for a 10-day visit to attend 4-H programs in Indiana. Participating in the trip sponsored by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce are Susan Knight of Calgary, Kim Shenfield of Bon Accord, Ben Graham of Vulcan and Corey Groves of Champion. The four will attend a send-off dinner in Calgary June 18, before departing for the 1988 Indiana State 4-H Conference at the Hoosier 4-H Centre near West Lafayette. When this five-day program is complete the Alberta delegates will spend a weekend with host families in nearby Hancock county before moving on to the Indiana State 4-H Roundup program at Purdue University. The delegates were chosen to attend this exchange at the provincial 4-H Selections program in May. For more information contact Marguerite Stark or Sherry Roth in Airdrie at 948-8509.

LEDUC HOSTING SECOND DAIRY CONGRESS

The second annual Alberta Dairy Congress and Trade Show will be held July 26 and 27 at the Leduc Curling Club. This specialized trade show will feature displays emphasizing the latest advances in equipment, products and management technology throughout the industry. In addition, educational seminars are planned for both days to provide additional in-depth information to dairy producers in areas of cow management, annual forage production, estate planning and other topics. For more information contact the Alberta Dairy Congress and Trade Show Society at Box 1189, Leduc, Alberta, T9E 2Y7, or phone 986-8108.

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AGRI-NEWS

June 20, 1988

For immediate release

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JUL 18 1988

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AGRICULTURE
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June 20, 1988
For immediate release

1988 Farm Safety Hike program launched

Women of Unifarm, working with Alberta Agriculture's Farm Safety Program, invite all Alberta farm families to "TAKE A HIKE" for farm safety again this summer.

This is the second annual Farm Safety Hike project that encourages farm families to walk about their farm and identify potential safety hazards using a Farm Safety Hiking Guide.

This year's hiking guide offers a new format and new guide questions for the family to discuss as they stop at each of the designated areas on their farm. The areas include the farm home, farm yard, the shop, chemical storage area, dugouts, barns and machinery.

Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga accepts the first copy of the 1988 Farm Safety Hiking Guide from Margaret Blanchard, president of the Women of Unifarm and Louie the Lightening Bug. The presentation was made as a kick off to the second annual farm safety awareness campaign.

(Cont'd)

"We were very pleased with the response we received to the 1987 Farm Safety Hike," says Jacqueline Galloway, promotions co-ordinator for Women of Unifarm. "About 3,000 guides were distributed all over Alberta.

"We take 'hikes' on our farms all the time but it's amazing what you find when you are looking at it from a safety point of view."

The 1988 hiking guide also offers hike participants an opportunity to win farm safety equipment such as disposable coveralls, pesticide safety kits, a fire extinguisher, spray safe wash tank, and first aid kits - all donated by various sponsors such as Cyanamid, Safety Supply of Canada, Kimberly Clark, Hoechst and Alberta Agriculture's farm safety program.

"All the participating families have to do is get one of the children to color the last page of the guide, answer the four evaluation questions and send it in to our office. There are about 25 prizes in all to be won," explains Galloway.

Every entry will receive a Child's Farm Safety Fun Kit from Alberta Power and TransAlta Utilities consisting of a LOUIE The Lightening Bug Coloring Book, stickers, a puppet and a lightbulb pencil.

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the 1988 Farm Safety Hiking Guide can contact any Alberta Agriculture district office, their local Women of Unifarm representative or the Unifarm office at 14815 - 119 Avenue, Edmonton. The guides are available throughout June.

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Contact: Jacqueline Galloway
998-0701

Ruby Ewaskow
398-2162

Solomon Kyeremanteng
427-2186

Calf preconditioning program being privatized

Acting on recommendations made by an advisory committee, Alberta Agriculture is making some major changes to the provincial calf preconditioning program and turning more responsibility for costs over to the beef industry

Producers participating in the program this year will have to assume the cost of buying eartags for calves registered on the program and pay all veterinary inspection and certification costs. As well auction market operators will be responsible for compiling their sales catalogues.

Dr. Ralph Shute, head of the department's health management branch and Dr. Casey Schipper, beef cattle veterinarian, in making the announcement, say the changes do not indicate a change in the department's commitment to the program.

The money previously earmarked for the program will be redirected to help producers with their livestock marketing efforts.

The specialists say the Alberta Certified Preconditioned Feeder Program advisory committee agreed at its annual meeting it was time the changes were made. The committee decided that since the program has become established and well regarded in Alberta, generating improved profits for farmers and feedlot owners, "that privatization of the program would now be timely and appropriate."

The advisory committee members include representatives of Alberta Agriculture, beef cattle producers, Alberta Cattle Feeders, Alberta Cattle Commission, Alberta Auction Market operators and the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association.

"During the past seven years, development and expansion of the calf preconditioning concept in Alberta was supported by the animal health division," says Schipper. "It has become accepted by progressive cattle producers as a profitable marketing alternative for their calves. Financial returns to management were generally substantial in terms of efficient rates of gain, greater sale weights, higher prices, increased calf returns, better cow condition and improved pasture utilization.

(Cont'd)

"Similarily during the same period there was a consistently high demand for good quality preconditioned calves by smaller or risk adverse feedlot operators. These cattlemen realized increased returns on premiums paid from decreased sickness rates, death losses and fewer feed adaptation problems. These returns often compensated them for their initial higher calf purchasing costs."

Dr. Shute, says the following changes will take effect immediately:

Eartags - Identification of preconditioned beef calves with the familiar green eartags carrying the Alberta logo and a unique eartag number, will now only be mandatory for calves offered for sale at public auction markets. These tags will continue to be inserted by or under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian after the preconditioning requirements have been met. The veterinary practitioner will sell these tags to the calf producer together with other goods and services which he may be requested to provide. The government will no longer be involved with the free distribution and monitoring of the eartags.

Certificates - A "Health Status Certificate" will be issued by the local herd veterinarian to calf producers who have successfully preconditioned their calves. This document will certify the identity, physical characteristics, nutritional background, immunization status and weaning date of groups of preconditioned cattle. This certificate must accompany calves on their way through the public auction marketing system.

Veterinary Visits - All veterinary fees incurred during the preconditioning period will be borne by calf producers. Alberta Agriculture will no longer provide free veterinary visits to producers who precondition their calves.

Sale Catalogues - Individual auction market operators will be responsible for compiling sales catalogues (assembled collection of health status certificates covering all animals sold in special "preconditioned calf" sales).

All other preconditioning requirements will remain unchanged.

(Cont'd)

"In spite of these changes in the program, Alberta Agriculture remains committed to the principle of improving the health status of calves and increasing financial returns to calf producers," says Shute.

"The department also recognizes that preconditioning should be an essential component of an overall calf marketing strategy. Therefore, it intends to develop a program designed to increase producer familiarity with a number of profitable calf marketing alternatives, to be achieved through education, extension and information aimed at facilitating decision making."

The branch head says financial resources previously allocated to the supply of free preconditioned eartags and one complimentary veterinary visit per year to each calf producer participating in the program, will now be redirected to this new marketing education program.

Efficient profitable marketing techniques will involve preparation of calves, timing and methods of sale. A desirable goal will be the selection of options rather than the acceptance of a set of recommendations.

"The department is confident that the private sector will become active participants in the delivery of this new calf marketing program," says Shute. "The information package is scheduled for field testing in 1988 and will be introduced more generally in 1989. The bottom line is that the input costs related to marketing of calves will be borne by the producer and not by Alberta Agriculture."

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Contact: Dr. C. Schipper
436-9343

For immediate release

Camrose beef producers pioneer management survey

Cattlemen in the county of Camrose have pioneered an industry survey, which is now being used to provide hundreds of Alberta producers with personalized beef herd management advice.

Following the 1987 pilot project, more than 3,500 beef producers in Alberta Agriculture's north central region, headquartered in Red Deer, have already responded this year to the questionaire which will generate personalized analyses of beef production practices.

George Rock, district agriculturist in Camrose, who co-ordinated the original county-wide survey, says the project is a two-way street. First, it provides producers with an assessment of how their operations compare to generally accepted industry standards.

Secondly, the information provides Alberta Agriculture specialists with some guidelines on where to target their extension efforts.

By answering a series of questions in more than a dozen areas, each producer supplied a profile on his beef herd production and management. Through computer analysis that profile was compared to production benchmarks. Confidental summary reports showed farmers where there were opportunities to improve management and make more money.

"For our planning purposes, we wanted to know where the industry was at in the County of Camrose and producers said if they were going to complete another survey they wanted to get something back from it," says Rock.

"For us to develop programs which were going to be of use to farmers we needed to know what management practices were being used and learn what common problems needed to be addressed.

"For example there would be no point in providing a seminar or other extension service on how to increase calving percentages if no one in the county had a problem in this area."

(Cont'd)

Camrose beef producers pioneer managment survey (cont'd)

In the Camrose project more than 290 farmers (about 52 per cent of beef producers in the county) responded to the survey questions which required mostly yes or no answers. Information on the forms was entered into the main computer program at Alberta Agriculture headquarters in Edmonton.

Rock says with this type of information it was possible to establish a baseline for the beef industry in the county.

The survey highlighted the three most common economic problems facing beef producers in Camrose county. Baby calf death loss was high; too many calves were being born late in the season; and the calving season itself was longer than it should be for maximum profitability.

Rock says with each one of these problems costing producers money, efforts directed to reducing the figures should translate into improved profits.

Among Camrose county producers the baby calf death loss averaged six to eight per cent while an industry benchmark pegs a two to four per cent death loss as an acceptable figure. Between 70 and 85 per cent of the Camrose county calf deaths occurred in the first two weeks after birth. The three leading causes of death were cited as calving difficulty, scours and pneumonia.

According to the survey the calving profile for the county showed too many calves being born late in the calving season. Rock says those late calves can be as much as 50 to 60 pounds lighter than early calves and its doubtful if they will ever catch up.

The district agriculturist says the objective is to get as many calves as possible born within that first 21 days of the calving season. Industry standards say it is realistic to expect 70 per cent of calves to be born in the first 21 days, 20 per cent in the second 21 days and 10 per cent in the final 21 days.

Camrose producers reported about 38 per cent of calves are born in the first 21 days, 32 per cent in the second 21 days, 18 per cent in the third 21-day period and 12 per cent thereafter.

(Cont'd)

Camrose beef producers pioneer management survey (cont'd)

Closely related to the calving profile is the length of the calving season. Rock says the survey showed Camrose county producers had an average 94-day calving season. For maximum profitability, a 63 to 65-day calving season is generally accepted as best to provide maximum profitability.

"From our point of view we can take this information and develop the type of programs that are going to address these key issues," says Rock. "We know that most producers will be interested in management advice on how to lower calf death loss, change the calving profile and shorten the calving season. It will help us be more effective in our work."

As well, the DA says the individual producer reports provide all those who participate with feedback on how their beef operations stack up. The reports also suggest the types of management changes needed which could improve production efficiency.

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Contact: George Rock
679-1210

For immediate release

Beef survey delivers the bottom line

A unique beef herd management analysis offered by Alberta Agriculture could show the average provincial cattleman how to increase income by between $8,000 and $10,000 a year through improved production efficiency.

The analysis is made by a computer program which compares an individual producer's operation to generally accepted industry standards. It points out where there are production shortfalls, suggests reasons for this shortfall and, using current market figures, shows how many production dollars are lost.

The Alberta Agricutlure beef management specialist who developed the program, says in some cases the exercise perhaps only confirms what farmers already knew.

But Dr. John Basarab, says it's that bottom line - the dollars and cents - that really brings the message home.

Basarab says the free analysis could show a beef producer with about 100 head of cattle where improvements could be made to increase calf weaning weights, reduce the number of open cows, shorten the calving season and reduce calf death losses.

"This isn't something the average beef producer with 40 or 50 head of cattle can go home and do overnight or even in one year," he says. "But by gradually directing his management toward improved production efficiency we estimate $10,000 in increased income is a realistic figure to expect.

"By answering the survey questions the farmers tell us how their beef operations are managed. We in turn can have that information, computer analysed to produce personalized, confidential producer reports that show where there are opportunities for improvement and how much more money could be made by improving production efficiency."

Basarab says the survey is the next best thing to sitting down with each beef producer in the province and giving one-on-one consultation. He says the process is fast, confidential and reliable.

(Cont'd)

After being pioneered by 290 farmers in Camrose County last year, about 7,000 producers in Alberta Agriculture's north central region, headquartered in Red Deer have been sent the survey this year. So far more than 3,500 responses have been returned for analysis, says Basarab.

The survey has also been requested in Sangudo, Drayton Valley, Athabasca and Lac La Biche districts.

The specialist says the survey can be completed on a district-wide or region-wide basis.

The producer reports show farmers how their production efficiency compares to the average of the top beef producers in the local area. By making a local comparison farmers know the producer report is talking about local conditions and using local benchmarks.

The specialist, says producers, at most, might need to invest about $25 per cow in management changes to generate the $10,000 in increased income.

Basarab makes his point by using a hypothetical 100-cow herd as an example. The figures used for this herd represent common production efficiency averages for the province.

The improved profits can usually be generated in four main areas. Using the example, Basarab says, if a farmer's calving season is 103 days long, he can earn about $4,500 more per year by shortening that through management changes to 63 days.

By making changes that reduce calf death losses from 10 per cent to an accepted industry standard of about four per cent, and reducing open cows from 10 per cent to four per cent, the 100-cow herd cattleman can generate an extra $5,200 a year.

The changes made in shortening the calving season, reducing calf death losses and open cows are going to produce benefits in two other areas - calf weaning weights and the number of calves weaned. Basarab says using his example these benefits are worth about $9,200 a year to the producer.

(Cont'd)

The producer report for the hypothetical exmaple suggests that this farmer's calving season is too long because of factors such as an extended breeding season, poor culling and pregnancy checking procedures, inadequate cow nutrition before and after calving, improper nutrition and management of replacement heifers and first calvers, and infertile or low fertility bulls.

It also suggests that the low weaning weights could be caused by poor fall pastures, poor milking mothers, post calving diseases and heavy internal/external parasite load.

"While the beef survey helps specialists and district agriculturists in their program planning and extension efforts, it's primary benefit is to help farmers identify their opportunities for improvement," says Basarab. "And knowing the basic facts about your beef herd is an essential management tool for any farmer."

For more information on the beef survey contact any Alberta Agriculture district office or Dr. John Basarab in Edmonton at 427-5332.

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Contact: Dr. John Basarab
427-5332

For immediate release

Blackhead can be problem for small-flock turkey producers

Owners of small flocks of turkeys in Alberta should be on watch for a common disease that can quickly prove fatal to young birds, if control measures aren't used.

Dr. Gordon Chalmers, a veterinarian with Alberta Agriculture's regional veterinary lab in Lethbridge, says Blackhead disease is a frequent problem among smaller flocks of turkeys, and can cause severe losses.

Chalmers says although Blackhead can devastate a flock if left unchecked, the disease can be controlled with medication mixed in the birds' drinking water and prevention is possible by feeding medicated rations to birds at all times.

The department specialist says the largest target group is the small flock owners of perhaps 50 or fewer birds who may allow young birds to roam freely or be raised in facilities where chickens have also been housed. Although chickens aren't affected by the disease they are known carriers.

"In the early days of rearing, the young birds are usually being fed on commercially prepared starter rations which contain medication to prevent Blackhead," says Chalmers. "But after several weeks, birds in a farmyard situation, are often switched to home-grown grains that don't contain any medication, which means that birds soon loose their protection.

"A farmer will notice that his young turkeys have been doing fine and looking well, then all of a sudden they will be off their feed, loose weight, look all droopy and eventually die."

Blackhead disease is transmitted to turkeys by a parasite known as the cecal worm which is commonly found in both chickens and turkeys. The eggs of the cecal worm may remain infective in the soil for three or more years and remain a threat to turkeys during this time.

(Cont'd)

Birds that are sick will appear dull and depressed and often stand by themselves with drooping tails, ruffled feathers and a sleepy appearance. Sulphur-colored yellow droppings is another common indicator of the disease.

The drug Dimetridazole, sold under the brand name of Emtryl, can be added to the drinking water or feed to cure birds and control further outbreaks of the disease.

Chalmers says the best policy is not to rear young turkeys in the same area where chickens have been kept, to raise birds on medicated rations, or be prepared to treat birds not raised on medicated rations.

Large turkey producers are generally not affected by the disease because their birds are housed separately away from other poultry and they feed commercially prepared rations at all times.

For more information on Blackhead disease and its control, contact any Alberta Agriculture regional poultry specialist or obtain a free copy of the department publication, "Blackhead Disease (Histomoniasis)" Agdex 663-19.

The factsheet is available from any Alberta Agriculture district office or from The Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Dr. Gordon Chalmers
381-5190

For immediate release

Link between nutrition and breeding cycle studied

An Alberta Agriculture specialist is among researchers in Canada and the United States studying cattle to find the link between nutrition and early return to normal estrous (heat) cycles.

Dr. Laura Rutter, a reproductive physiologist with the department in Edmonton, says identifying the link could lead to development of a feed additive which would be useful to beef producers, especially in summers like this when pasture and forage may be inadequate.

In theory the additive would allow cattle an early return to normal estrous cycle after calving, and subsequently early breeding, even if they weren't in top physical condition.

Rutter says it is commonly known that cows lacking proper nutrition, particularly energy, are often late in returning to a normal heat cycle after calving, but scientists don't fully understand the biological connection.

Questions include what specific elements of nutrition are missing and how does that affect the animal's ability to return to heat? How does the cow know her condition is less than adequate? How is that message communicated to her reproductive system?

Rutter says once the nutritional element is identified a feed supplement, which would essentially trick the cow into thinking she was in good condition, could be used on a short-term basis.

The supplement wouldn't negate the need to provide proper rations for livestock, but would allow cows to cycle normally and rebreed, until better quality feed was available or the animal was turned out onto good pasture.

Although several more years of study are required, the results of Rutter's preliminary work have just been released in the Journal of Animal Science, published by the American Society of Animal Science. This study, which is part of very active research work on the subject, was funded by Alberta Agriculture's Farming for the Future program.

(Cont'd)

The Alberta Agriculture specialist says a cow in good condition should show signs of estrous or first heat at 50 days after calving. And under optimum conditions a cow should experience one observed heat cycle before the breeding season begins.

Rutter says research shows cows have low fertility during the first estrous cycle and a much higher fertility rate by second and subsequent observed heats.

There are two factors which prevent return to estrous cycles after calving. The physical stimulation of suckling by the calf activates a signal to the cow's brain which inhibits reproduction, although the cow can usually "escape" from the inhibition after about three weeks. The second factor known to inhibit onset of estrus is nutrition.

Working with Dr. J.G. Manns, dean of graduate studies and research at the University of Saskatchewan, Dr. Rutter tried to determine whether glucose (sugar) was the key element in influencing the return to normal ovarian activity in lactating beef cows.

After their 1987 study involving 20 mature Hereford-cross cows, the theory suspecting glucose and/or the hormones which regulate where glucose will be used in the body, is still a leading contender, although there were no scientific breakthroughs.

Rutter says most beef cows are in a hypoglycemic (low blood sugar) condition after calving because the demand for glucose increases significantly once milk production begins and the cow cannot eat enough to meet that demand.

The average milking beef cow puts about 500 grams of glucose into its milk every day. The specialist says if the cow isn't receiving adequate rations to produce the glucose required, she will begin to mobilize body fat to meet its energy requirements.

"A cow may calve in fairly good condition, but if she isn't fed properly she will begin to lose condition," says Rutter. "And as condition drops, the interval from calving to normal heat cycles is extended. As an example a beef cow that has a condition score of 2.5 that loses one-half point of condition after calving will extend the interval of coming into regular cycle from the normal 50 days after calving to 70 to 90 days."

(Cont'd)

To test their theory, Rutter and Manns needed to monitor cows in poor condition with low blood sugar levels. But because the group of research animals available at the University of Saskatchewan were in good condition, the researchers essentially had to take glucose away from the cattle.

To achieve this, each research cow was given a drug which blocked about 500 grams of glucose from being re-absorbed from the kidneys into the cow's blood stream and allowed it to be dumped into the urine.

Although not dramatic, there was indication that lower blood glucose levels or the influence of hormones that regulate glucose, affected the cow's reproductive system.

"What I think we did by specifically depressing the amount of glucose available to the cow was cause less estrogen to be produced by the ovary," says Rutter.

Estrogen is a hormone necessary to produce standing heat, as well as direct other key aspects of the cow's reproductive system. She said although the cows suffered an insult to their systems by denying glucose for a short period, the ovary was able to quickly recover.

Rutter says the preliminary work, which is the fourth study in a series in which she has been involved, just leads to more questions that need to be answered.

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Contact: Dr. Laura Rutter
427-5304

For immediate release

1988 cash lease rates down for agricultural land

A survey released by Alberta Agriculture indicates that 1988 cash lease rates for farm land are down from $2 to $5 per acre across the province, compared to 1987 levels.

The annual survey which was conducted by the department's statistics branch between January and May covered 461 private lease agreements and is intended to determine the going rate for cash rent in the province.

Rental rates in the Lethbridge-Medicine Hat area for irrigated cropland most commonly ranged from $30 to $65 per acre with an average of $47 per acre. Dryland rates in the same area were $12 to $25 per acre with an average of $19 per acre.

Rates in the High River-Airdrie-Drumheller area ranged from $10 to $40 per acre with an average of $21 per acre.

The Red Deer-Wetaskiwin-Camrose area saw rates most commonly ranging from $10 to $30 per acre with an average of $19 per acre.

Vermilion-Smoky Lake-Bonnyville area had rates ranging from $4 to $32 per acre, most commonly in the $10 to $25 per-acre range with an average of $16 per acre.

The Edmonton-Thorhild-Barrhead area had cash lease rates ranging from $4 to $40 per acre, most commonly in the $11 to $30 per-acre range with an average of $19 per acre.

In the Grande Prairie-Fairview-Peace River area rates ranged from $4 to $31 per acre, more commonly in the $7 to $20 per-acre range with an average of $11 per acre.

The reduction in rental charges reflected the expectation of tenants and landlords in the survey, based on their recent past experience and their outlook for the 1988 year.

For more information and a copy of the survey, please contact Garth Nickorick, Alberta Agriculture, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

Farmers prefer short-term agreements

An Alberta Agriculture survey shows more than half of the cash rental and crop share land leasing agreements made this year were for only a one-year term, reflecting concern about future grain prices.

The recent survey completed by the department's statistics branch showed cash rents were signed with a one-year term in 66 per cent of the survey responses, while fifty-seven per cent of crop share leases were of a one-year term.

The length of lease often reflects the level of optimism of the parties involved in lease agreements, says Garth Nickorick, a farm business management branch economist. Agreements with a term of three years or longer refect optimism about the grain economy.

Nickorick says the survey shows each year more lease agreements are being recorded on paper, indicating the verbal deal settled on a handshake is slowly disappearing. Sixty-nine per cent of all lease agreements were written, while 80 per cent of cash lease agreements are recorded in writing.

The survey also showed landlords do regularly share seed, fertilizer, and chemical expenses in crop share agreements. Of those surveyed, 63 per cent of landlords share seed, fertilizer and chemical expenses in the same proportion as the crop is shared. It is noted that many landlords that do not pay part of the expenses reduce their share of the crop from one-third to one-quarter rather than pay part of the expenses.

Provincially, the one-third owner:two-third tenant crop share split is most common. Seventy-nine per cent of agreements are one-third:two-third splits.

The survey found cash rent can be paid at anytime. Forty-eight per cent of cash rent tenants pay in the spring prior to entry on the land. Thirty-two per cent pay the rent partially in the spring with the balance after the harvest.

For more information and a copy of the survey, contact Garth Nickorick, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

For immediate release

Pasture leasing rates up slightly

Alberta Agriculture's statistics branch survey of pasture leasing rates for 1988 shows a slight increase rates of about $1 per cow/calf pair per month, compared to 1987 rates.

As expected, rates range widely on a per acre basis reflecting grass and water conditions. On a cow-calf pair per month basis (AUM) the most common lease rate from Edmonton-Montana was $10.50 to $12.50 per pair per month. Edmonton to Peace River rates were lower being in the $7 to $10 per pair per month.

Provincially, the rates did vary from $5 to $21 per pair per month.

Northern provincial grazing reserves ranged from $7.80 to $9.45 per AUM, while the southern grazing reserves charge were $10.55 to $13.70 per AUM.

Forty-seven per cent of the lease agreements were recorded in writing.

For additional information and a copy of the survey, contact Garth Nickorick, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

For immediate release

Bankers take initiative to learn about agriculture

Bankers continue to take initiative in learning about agriculture and providing the best service possible to their rural clientele, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Garth Nickorick, co-ordinator of the ninth annual Agriculture Workshop For Lenders, says the highest participation ever at the the 1988 session shows a keen level of interest among bankers and other commercial lenders.

Participants at this year's conference included representatives from the Alberta Indian Agricultural Development Corporation of Calgary, Revenue Canada of Winnipeg, and The Canadian Bankers' Association of Toronto.

"Banks are in the business of lending money to earn interest and farmers are in the business of producing commodities to earn a profit," says Nickorick. "Although their work may be different, both parties need to make profits in order to achieve their long term goals."

Nickorick says it's the ongoing need for improved communication which has made the annual seminar co-sponsored by Olds College and Alberta Agriculture so popular. Over the nine years, more than 725 bankers have attended the five-day workshop.

"The major objective of the workshop is to ensure continuity of the farmer-lender relationship, by familiarizing agricultural lenders with current farm production methods, marketing techniques and business alternatives that can provide a profitable return for producers," says Nickorick.

It has been well supported by farm producer groups and associations such as Alberta Cattle Commission, Alberta Potato Commission, Alberta Hog Producers Marketing Board, Alberta Wheat Pool, United Feeds, United Grain Growers, Alberta Egg and Fowl Marketing Board, Travel Alberta, Town of Olds, Alberta Lotteries and Canadian Pro Rodeo Association.

(Cont'd)

In addition to classroom study, participants are given several on-farm tours in the Olds area to obtain a first-hand look at farm operations. Part of the bankers' "take-home" reference material is a 600-page manual containing production information and cost and returns data on at least 10 major agricultural enterprises in the province.

"The reference manual has proven useful to agricultural consultants, farm managers/owners, appraisers, accountants, landmen, and agricultural students as a quick source of production and economic data that is needed to make business decisions in agriculture," says Nickorick.

A copy of the Agricultural Lenders' Manual can be obtained for $26 per copy from Olds College, Extension Services, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0, call 556-8339.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

For immediate release

Lender's manual is a good source of information

Farmers and agricultural advisers looking for a quick reference source on production and economic data information should obtain a copy of the lenders' manual produced by Alberta Agriculture.

Garth Nickorick, farm management economist with the department in Olds says the 600-page 1988 Agricultural Lenders' Manual is a reliable source of current information and of good value.

It is described as a lenders' manual because it was developed for use as a reference text for Alberta Agriculture's annual "Agricultural Workshop for Lenders" held each June at Olds College.

The 600-page manual contains production information and cost/returns data on at least 10 major agricultural enterprises in the province.

"It has proven useful to agricultural consultants, farm managers/owners, appraisers, accountants, landmen and agricultural students as a quick source of data that is needed to make business decisions in agriculture," says Nickorick.

Copies of the manual are available for $26 each from Olds College, Extension Services, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0, call 556-8339. Cheques should be made payable to Olds College.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

Agri-News Briefs

BARLEY GROWERS PLAN MARKETING SEMINAR

Barley growers and cattlemen are invited to Red Deer later this month for a one-day seminar on how to market their grain and livestock. Sponsored by the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA), the June 29 livestock and grains marketing strategy seminar will feature speakers providing an analysis and outlook on grains and oilseeds and livestock markets. There will also be a report on how fluctuations and currencies affect agricultural commodity prices. Gerry Pampalon and David Guichon, marketing specialists with Palliser Grain Co.; Grant Klaiber, a Calgary agricultural broker and farmer; Lynn Malmberg, an analyst with Lakeside Packers Ltd. in Brooks; and Norman Cameron, an economics professor at the University of Manitoba will address the 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. seminar at the Great West Inn. A registration fee of $40 for members and $50 for non-members, which includes coffee and lunch, is being charged. To register or for more information phone the WBGA office in Calgary at 291-3630.

POULTRY DAY AT U OF A

The University of Alberta in Edmonton is staging its second annual Poultry Research Day June 23. Hosted by the department of animal science, the day provides an opportunity for poultry producers and others in the poultry industry to talk to specialists about the latest achievements in poultry research and take a tour of research facilities. Registration is at 9:30 a.m. For more information contact Frank Robinson at 432-3234.

DAIRY AND PORK SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS AVAILABLE

Copies of speeches provided at two of the University of Alberta's annual livestock seminars are now available. The proceedings from the 1988 Alberta Dairy Seminar and the 1988 Banff Pork Seminar are available at a cost of $20 per copy. To order write the Agriculture Division, Faculty of Extension, 238 Corbett Hall, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2G4.

(Cont'd)

FORAGE TOUR PLANNED NEAR PINCHER CREEK

Projects that include converting forest land into tame pasture and using wind power to pump water, will be featured during a day-long forage tour in the Twin Butte - Pincher Creek area of southern Alberta in late July. The Foothills Forage Tour, set for July 28, will feature four stops during the day, says Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist Bob Lyons in Pincher Creek. Two buses, one at the Twin Butte Community Hall and the other at the Pincher Creek provincial government building will depart at 9 a.m. for the first stop of the day - a look at a forested area that has been converted to tame pasture. Other stops during the day will include a look at a brush control project, and forage varietal trial plots. During the final stop of the day at the Cloudy Ridge Ranch, participants will see how wind power is used to pump water and hear a talk on ranch management. Registration fee is $15. For more information call Bob Lyons at 627-4023.

"PEAS FOR PROFIT" FEATURE OF SUMMER TOUR

Alberta farmers interested in pea production are urged to set aside August 4 for a day-long tour in the Westlock - Barrhead area that will focus on new pea varieties. Beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Hazel Bluff Hall, west of Westlock, the Peas for Profit - 1988 Summer Tour will feature a look at 28 pea varieties being grown in a trial project for grain production and four varieties being tested for silage production. There will also be a look at fertility and innoculation trials and stops at various fields of peas in the area. The early registration fee of $20 includes transporation, lunch, a steak barbecue and refreshments. The day is being co-ordinated by the Pulse Growers' Association of Alberta - Northern Branch. For more information contact Alberta Agriculture district offices in Westlock at 349-4465, Barrhead at 674-8213, Morinville at 939-4351 or Stony Plain at 963-6101.

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AGRI-NEWS

June 27, 1988

For immediate release

CANADIANA
JUL 26 1988

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

For immediate release

Grades 4 - 6 nutrition course available to Alberta schools

The adventure will continue in Alberta elementary school classrooms this fall as Alberta Agriculture releases the second half of its food and nutrition education series - Explore Nutritious Alberta.

The four young characters who came to life in the pages of the Division 1 course last year, will be back in a new set of adventures designed for Division 2 - Grades 4, 5 and 6.

Aileen Whitmore, Alberta Agriculture's provincial food and nutrition specialist, says the Division 1 theme built around the adventures of four fictional youngsters who discover facts about food and nutrition, has been continued in the Division 2 course.

The material, which is designed to support the nutrition component of Alberta Education's mandatory health curriculum is available free of charge to Alberta teachers who have completed the necessary in-service training. Teachers interested in using the materials this fall, are urged to make application now through any district home economist or regional food and nutrition specialist.

Teachers can obtain both Division 1 and Division 2 course outlines of Explore Nutritious Alberta at training sessions to be scheduled in each district.

Through the creative writing style of Edmonton author Andrea Spalding, the four fictional youngsters decide to turn learning about proper food and nutrition into an adventure and form Club 4.

From there the story line explores a total of 30 different lessons, 10 for each grade level, showing the relationship between nutrition, food and agriculture.

The teacher-ready handbook contains all the materials teachers will need in presenting the subject, says Whitmore. Along with the story lines for each lesson the binder contains posters, color photographs, drawings, graphs and other artwork which all helps illustrate good nutrition.

As well, the course material provides each grade with ideas for activities they can complete at home.

(Cont'd)

Whitmore says the concept is to deliver a message about proper nutrition and good eating habits, while at the same time making students aware of the range of Alberta grown and processed food products and the role of agriculture in our daily lives.

The Grade 4 lessons include making nail soup and building the biggest hamburger in the world as a means to identifying the four food groups and understanding what our daily requirements are from each of those food groups. A map also helps students understand which regions of Alberta produce certain types of food.

The Grade 5 activities have students involved as shoppers' apprentices which gives an introduction to food selection and being good consumers. Students are also involved in meal planning, matching foods to suit dietary needs and learning about advertising messages.

The Grade 6 lessons include understanding the nutrients of food and learning about factors that influence food choices. Students also are given a glimpse of unique sources of food production in Alberta as they learn about commercial fishing on Lesser Slave Lake, learn about the farming practices and lifestyle of a central Alberta Hutterite Colony and learn about sunflower seed production in southern Alberta.

"The materials included with the course highlight the agriculture products and range of processed foods produced in Alberta," says Whitmore. "Along with the proper nutrition theme, we try to weave in an agricultural story of interest to urban students and a food processing story of interest to farm children."

The manual was written by Brandywine Enterprise Ltd. and designed by Studio 3 Graphics Ltd. The materials were developed under the direction of a committee chaired by Whitmore, with Faye Douglas-Phillips, regional home economist in Barrhead and Linda St. Onge, food and nutrition specialist in Edmonton, as members.

For more information on the Explore Nutritious Alberta material, contact any Alberta Agriculture district office, the regional food and nutrition specialist in Airdrie or the home economics branch in Edmonton at 427-2412.

Contact: Aileen Whitmore
427-2412

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

Les Lyster appointed economic services director

An 18-year veteran with Alberta Agriculture has been appointed director of the economic services division in Edmonton.

Les Lyster, whose broad career with the department has ranged from serving as a district agriculturist in southern Alberta, to a regional farm economist in Airdrie, and most recently as acting chairman of the planning secretariat, will assume his new post July 1.

LES LYSTER

Lyster, 40, takes over the position previously held by Mel Cameron, who has been named senior economist with the department.

His appointment was announced by Doug Radke, assistant deputy minister of the planning and development sector.

As director of the economic services division, Lyster will be responsible for five branches of the department which provide a wide range of services to Alberta farmers and agribusiness.

He will oversee the statistics branch, headed by Chuck Sterling, the market analysis branch headed by David Walker, and the production economics branch, headed by Carlyle Ross, all in Edmonton, the farm business management branch, headed by Wilson Loree in Olds, and the farm law section headed by Cal Brandley in Lethbridge.

The division provides a dual role of undertaking research and supplying information on commodity markets, production economics, business management skills, agricultural statistics and farm law to producers as well as to department staff. The division also undertakes research and analysis in support of the development of provincial agricultural policies.

(Cont'd)

Raised on the family farm at Red Willow, northeast of Stettler, and after completing his high school education, Lyster attended the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

He graduated in 1970 with a bachelor of science degree in agricultural economics and later returned in 1978 to obtain his masters degree also in agricultural economics.

The new director began his career with the department first as a summer assistant in the Drumheller district office in 1969. After graduating from university he obtained a posting as district agriculturist first in Strathmore and then in Lethbridge district offices.

Drawing on his educational background in economics, in 1971 he was appointed supervisor of farm records and analysis with the farm business management branch, which at that time was located in Edmonton.

Later involved in a joint federal-provincial program, he served as a regional farm management specialist in Drumheller between 1973 and 1975 before taking the job as a regional farm economist with the department in Airdrie between 1975 and 1980.

Lyster returned to Edmonton in 1980 to become a grain market analyst, with the market analysis branch. After a four-year stint with the branch he was named a member of the planning secretariat in 1984. He later was appointed acting chairman of the secretariat in March 1987.

The planning secretariat's primary role is to assist the department's executive committee and Ministers of Agriculture in areas of agricultural policy analysis, policy development, strategic planning, program planning and evaluation.

In announcing the appointment, the assistant deputy minister said Lyster's background and experience will serve him well in the new post.

"Les' many years of service with the department coupled with his academic background and his previous experience make him well qualified as division director," said Doug Radke.

"I'm sure he will continue Mel Cameron's excellent work and ensure that Alberta Agriculture's economic services division maintains its leading role in Canadian agriculture."

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Contact: Doug Radke 427-1957
Les Lyster 427-2417

Early weaning offers benefits to beef producers

Alberta beef producers faced with a shortage of grass or water should consider weaning their beef calves much earlier than usual, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Dale Engstrom, acting head of the department's animal nutrition section in Edmonton, says the benefits will be better growth of the calves and less loss of condition on the cows.

He says more labor and management is required for the early weaned calves, but the savings in feed costs can compensate for this.

"Weaning beef calves at three to four months of age is seldom practised in Alberta, but has been a routine practice in many areas of the United States," says Engstrom.

"There are several advantages for both cows and calves. The dry cow has a much lower requirement for feed and water than the suckled cow and is better able to maintain her body weight on relatively poor quality pasture. The young, early weaned calf, if fed properly, is more efficient than an older calf in converting feed to gain."

He says as an example, in a study conducted in Ohio, early weaned calves (110 days) and their dams were 43.0 per cent more efficient in converting feed into calf gain than were normally (220 days) weaned cow-calf pairs.

Therefore, if dry lotting or supplemental feeding of cows and calves is being considered as a drought measure, it will be cheaper to feed weaned calves and cows separately rather than as suckling pairs.

Disadvantages that have to be considered include increased labor, the need for excellent calf nutrition and management, and the need for suitable calf feeding facilities, says the specialist. Placing early weaned calves in a custom feedlot, experienced in calf feeding, is one way of overcoming these problems.

(Cont'd)

"One key to a successful early weaning program is the feeding of a balanced ration," says Engstrom. "An important ingredient in any calf ration is good quality forage. Silage or hay can be used as long as it is not too mature, is free from dust and mold and is readily eaten by the calves. Grain should be fed at approximately one to 1.5 per cent of body weight and the ration must include all necessary vitamins and minerals."

The specialist suggests the following rations would be suitable for 300 pound calves gaining 2.0 lb/day.

		lb/head/day	per cent
#1	Alfalfa-grass hay	7.0	65.5
	Barley grain	2.7	25.0
	32% Beef supplement	1.0	9.5
		10.7	100
#2	Barley silage	15.0	79.0
	Barley grain	2.2	11.5
	32% Beef supplement	1.8	9.5
		19.0	100

Farmers are advised that when preparing rations for early weaned calves grain should be coarsely ground or rolled. Whole oats could be used instead of barley grain, but the amount should be increased by about 10 per cent.

Protein supplements should contain little or no urea. A highly palatable grain mix is necessary to encourage adequate intake. Dustiness can be reduced by the addition of two or three per cent wet molasses or canola oil.

Engstrom says one way to ensure adequate intake after weaning is to creep feed the calves for 30 days before weaning. For maximum benefit the grain ration used for creep feeding should be similar to the ration used after weaning.

"Early weaning of normal, healthy calves (three to four months of age) should be considered if pasture quality or water availability becomes a problem," he says. "Since more efficient use of available feed is possible, the economics of this management decision are favorable."

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Contact: Dale Engstrom
436-9150

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

AFFDA: Preserving the farm fuel benefit

Officials with Alberta Treasury say the Alberta Farm Fuel Distribution Allowance (AFFDA) was created to be used but not abused.

The provincial government department, in a recap of the program structure and success over the years, says while nearly 70,000 Alberta farmers benefited from the AFFDA last year, a system is also in place to stop anyone taking advantage of the program.

The Alberta Farm Fuel Distribution Allowance is a provincial program that assists Alberta farmers by reducing farm fuel expenses. In 1987-88, $130 million was budgeted for AFFDA and more than 69,000 farmers benefited from the program.

Under the AFFDA program, the price of marked (purple) gasoline, diesel and heating oil is reduced by nine cents per litre. In addition, farmers are also exempt from the five cents per litre provincial fuel tax.

It is estimated that an average Alberta farmer saves $2,000 per year because of this farm fuel price advantage. Farmers can obtain these benefits upon completion and approval of a Declaration of Alberta Farmer form available from Albert Treasury or a bulk dealer.

Alberta Treasury has placed considerable emphasis upon preventing abuse of the AFFDA program so that this benefit for farmers can be preserved. The most common form of abuse occurs when marked fuel is used by non-farmers or by farmers in non-farm-related activities.

Significant abuses of AFFDA occurred during the April 1987 farm fuel price war. During this price war, the effective cost of fuel purchased by some farmers was as low as 3.5 cents per litre. The commercial market price was reduced by the AFFDA grant of 14 cents per litre and the federal fuel tax exemption of 7.5 cents, as well as the special dealer discounts offered during the price war. An abuse problem arose when some individuals purchased large volumes of fuel and sold it to non-farmers as the commercial market price.

(Cont'd)

Alberta Treasury responded to these occurrences by conducting audits. When audits determine that fuel has been diverted to non-farming operations, the 14 cent per litre AFFDA benefit is recovered and penalties and interest may be assessed.

In cases where someone has conspired with another party to purchase farm fuel with the intent of selling it to non-farmers for profit, criminal charges can be laid in addition to the recovery of the AFFDA benefit.

Alberta Treasury audit staff have been given special constable status to enable them to be more effective in enforcement of the legislation.

In addition, Alberta Treasury receives assistance from policing agencies of various provincial departments such as Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, and Transportation and Utilities. Many of the audits and investigations result from tips received from the public, all of which are followed up.

During the 1987 farm fuel price war, Alberta Treasury received 386 tips. More than 200 investigations have led to many assessments involving major penalty and interest charges. Investigations continue.

"Farmers, fuel dealers and the public play an important role in preserving the AFFDA benefit," says Don Russell, manager of tax information services for the department. "Alberta Treasury appreciates your continued co-operation in eliminating abuse of the AFFDA program."

For more information concerning AFFDA and the eligible uses of marked fuel, call Alberta Treasury, Revenue Administration at (403) 427-3044 or 1-800-262-9069 (Alberta toll-free).

-30-

Contact: Don Russell
427-8790

For immediate release

Minimum dugout specs are not "too big"

The minimum specs on the size of dugouts covered by the Alberta Water Supplies Assistance Program have been set to maximize both the quantity and quality of stored water, says a program official.

While some farmers are concerned the minimum size is bigger than they need, Bruce Olson, program co-ordinator in Edmonton, says many producers who have constructed dugouts to the minimum specifications or larger in the past have said they are glad they did.

The Alberta Water Supplies Assistance Program, which helps farmers with the cost of constructing or upgrading dugouts, is using the same minimum size requirement that the federal Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) has used for many years, says Olson. PFRA and Alberta Agriculture are working closely to provide services to farmers during the 1988 drought crisis.

Under either Alberta Agriculture or PFRA guidelines a dugout must be at least 2,616 cubic yards, (as an example about 140 feet long by 80 feet wide and about 14 feet deep), before a farmer is eligible to receive government assistance.

"The minimum standards were established by PFRA several years ago after they conducted a survey of the three prairie provinces," says Olson. "The survey helped them determine a minimum size which they felt would provide a two year water supply even if precipitation is low.

"Since one main objective of the Alberta Water Supplies Assistance Program is to create drought resistant water supplies the PFRA standard was appropriate."

Olson says farmers planning a dugout are required to meet or exceed minimum size requirement.

(Cont'd)

Minimum requirements under the water supplies assistance program says a dugout must have a volume of at least 2,616 cubic yards (2,000 cubic metres) which creates a capacity for about 440,000 gallons. For pasture use it must be at least 13.15 feet (four metres) deep and for year-round use at least 14.75 feet (4.5 metres) deep. The dugout must have a slide slope of 4:1 and an end slope of 1½:1.

"Depth is a key point in maintaining water quality," says Olson. "Shallower water will heat up rapidly resulting in increased algae growth which can be harmful to cattle. As well a dugout with low sloping sides is more conducive to weed growth and may encourage cattle to wade into the water.

"The deeper the dugout the better. If you can create the volume of water required in depth rather than in surface area it also reduces the amount of evaporation losses."

Under the dugout construction and rehabilitation program, which is one component of the overall water supplies assistance program, a farmer receives up to $1,650 in assistance per project to construct new dugouts or upgrade existing ones.

For more information on Alberta Agriculture's Dugout and Stockwatering Facility Construction and Rehabilitiation Program contact any Alberta Agriculture district or regional office or Bruce Olson in Edmonton at 427-2181.

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Contact: Bruce Olson
427-2181

For immediate release

New district home economist appointed in Evansburg

BRENDA STAMMEN

A graduate of the University of Manitoba has been appointed the new Alberta Agriculture district home economist in Evansburg.

Brenda Stammen, a native of Rorketon, Manitoba has taken over the northwest agricultural region post following the resignation last year of Chris Murphy.

Stammen's appointment was recently announced by Faye Douglas Phillips, the department's regional home economist in Barrhead.

Raised on the family mixed farm, Stammen obtained her bachelor of human ecology degree from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg.

Prior to joining Alberta Agriculture she worked as a teacher's aide at Ste. Rose Elementary School and Ste. Rose Collegiate Institute in Ste. Rose du Lac, Manitoba.

Stammen worked with learning disabled students in areas of life skills and general subject areas, as well as home economics class students.

In her new position she will be providing farm families in the Evansburg district with services in the areas of financial and family resource management, food and nutrition, 4-H and other related home economics information.

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Contact: Brenda Stammen
727-3673

For immediate release

New design in forage and seed samplers available

Alberta forage producers and seed growers - ever encouraged to have their products tested for quality - will now have access to Alberta-made tools that should make the job of collecting samples easier and more efficient.

A former Alberta Agriculture employee who has been involved in the business of feed and soil analysis for nearly 30 years, has just developed a line of sampling tools that eliminates many of the problems associated with collecting forage and seed samples. Work continues on design for a new type of soil sampling tool as well.

Don Laverty, of Edmonton, has established Star Quality Samplers, the only company in Western Canada that manufactures sampling equipment.

Laverty who worked for the department for 29 years before his 1987 retirement, was originally director of the department's soil and feed testing laboratory. He later became special projects co-ordinator for the soils branch.

"During my years of working with soil and feed analyses there was always a recurring problem with sampling tools. Although sampling tools were available and did the job, we saw where improvement could be made. Often Alberta manufacturers were encouraged to develop an improved design but because it is a narrow and specialized market, no one was interested."

Working with a machining company at Nisku, Laverty has developed two types of forage sampling tools and two sizes of seed sampling tools.

One of the main achievements in the forage sampler design is the cutting tip, says Laverty. Designed and sharpened to work like the blade of a breadknife, the cutting tip won't plug up with forage material like the serrated edge of other tools.

The tip has been designed to fit as a replacement tip on existing American-made forage sampling tools now used in Alberta.

(Cont'd)

Laverty has also developed a completely new design for the forage sampling tool. The Star Uni-Forage Sampler is a hollow stainless steel probe with the replaceable "breadknife" cutting edge on one end and a T-style handle on the other end. It is pushed into a bale of hay rather than augered in like other foreign-made models.

Laverty says just by using the weight of the shoulder, a farmer can push the uni-sampler two-thirds of the way into a bale of hay and then by working the handle back and forth a few times can cut into the bale the full depth of the probe.

The farmer then pulls the probe from the bale, removes the T-handle by releasing a small pin and then using a piece of wood dowling, pushes the hay sample core into a plastic bag. By reattaching the T-handle, the producer is ready to take the next probe. To obtain a representative sample of a uniform lot of hay 15 to 20 bales need to be probed.

Laverty has developed a Multi-forage Sampler which allows the farmer to take a fully representative sample without emptying the sampler after probing each bale. This tool consists of a msaller diameter stainless steel probe with the same type of cutting tip. The T-handle has been replaced by a collection device, equipped with a plastic bag, which can hold up to 20 sample cores at a time. After taking a representative sample, the plastic bag can be easily removed and labelled and is then ready to be sent away for analysis.

The stainless steel seed sampler, known as a "trier", is designed in two sizes for use by certified and registered seed producers who need to have product samples analysed.

The seed probes, either 3/8 inch or one inch in diameter and 20 to 32 inches long respectively, can be pushed into a bag of seed, turned 180 degrees and removed, collecting the size of samples that meet Agriculture Canada specifications.

Laverty says while he has received interest from Alberta Agriculture district offices, forage associations, feed companies and seed suppliers he says the new line of tools are also practical items for farmers to own.

"To get a proper analysis you need good samples. And the best time to take those samples is when the crop has just been harvested. Having the proper sampling tools available, when you need it taken, is important."

"The sampling tools that we have developed I believe are affordable for a single farmer or perhaps a group of farmers in a community to purchase and have handy when they are needed."

Laverty says Star Quality Samplers is also doing design work on a fertilizer sampling cup, and a completely new style of soil sampler which works on the principle of a "ditch witch" taking a slice of soil rather than a core sample.

The company can also build research and scientific specialty tools, upon request, that may be required for very specific purposes.

For more information on the Star Quality sampling tools contact Don Laverty in Edmonton at 5719 - 114 A Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 3M8 or phone 434-3367.

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Contact: Don Laverty
434-3367

June 27, 1988
For immediate release

Homemade depth sounder module works well

Alberta farmers involved in monitoring water table wells as part of their salinity control projects, will be glad that an easy-to-use depth sounder has been developed.

The Dryland Salinity Control Association, headquartered in Warner, Alberta, has developed an instrument that can be made easily and economically to read water table wells.

Don Wentz, Alberta Agriculture's regional soil specialist in Lethbridge, says that a homemade depth sounder module which attaches to an extension cord seems to fill the need.

The module consists of a nine-volt battery, a plug and beeper, all contained in a plastic box. The module plugs into an extension cord that can be easily marked with a waterproof pen.

DEPTH SOUNDER

"I use a 10-metre cord caddy because it is easy to mark and rewinds into a carrying case," he says. "To use the module, you plug it into the cord and lower the end of the cord into the well. When the plug contacts the water the circuit is completed and the beeper sounds. The module can be removed and stored once the readings are completed."

Wentz says other measuring devices such as blow tubes and ploppers worked well but supplies are often limited and repairs of damaged pieces are difficult to make. Blow tubes can be physically taxing for farmers who have a lot of wells to read.

(Cont'd)

The new depth sounder modules are available from the Dryland Salinity Control Association at cost. To order send a $15 cheque, payable to the Dryland Salinity Control Association, to: Dryland Salinity Control Association, Agriculture Centre, Lethbridge, Alberta, T1J 4C7.

The cord caddy costs about $30 and can be purchased from most hardware outlets.

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Contact: Don Wentz
381-5126

For immediate release

Take the challenge of attending Alberta Women's Week

To meet the challenges of a fast-paced world which is constantly changing, Alberta Agriculture district home economists have co-ordinated a new and exciting program for the Alberta Women's Week Conference in July.

Organizing committee members, Randi Sandbu and Holly Pidzarko, DHEs in Westaskiwin and Ponoka respectively, say the message of the July 18 to 20 conference at Olds College will urge Alberta farm women to take the challenge and turn stumbling blocks into opportunities.

"Keynote speaker Jolene Brown, a human resource consultant from Iowa state, says many people spend too much of their lives doing things the way they always have in the past," says Sandbu.

"Her session, 'Stepping Out', is for those who choose to master their own destiny by negotiating change. She will focus on the essential, non-traditional skills of achievement and leadership."

Pidzarko adds, "The select-a-sessions that follow will include an opportunity for you to examine three different aspects of your life - family, farm and personal. Marriage enrichment strategies, farm business arrangements, and women's health issues are just a few examples of the many topics which will be offered."

The DHEs say the first step is to get registrations in before the July 4 deadline. Conference participants should ask their district home economist about the "four people for the price of three" special.

For more information on the conference contact any Alberta Agriculture district office.

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Contact: Randi Sandbu 352-1307

Holly Pidzarko 783-7072

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AGRI-NEWS

July 4, 1988

For immediate release

CANADIANA
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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

For immediate release

Asia trade mission helps strengthen relations

Alberta Agriculture trade officials have furthered the relationship between Alberta and its Asian trading partners during a recent three-week mission to four Pacific Rim countries.

The rounds of meetings with government and business leaders in the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Korea and Japan strengthened the bond between existing players and as well allowed new contacts to be established.

Cliff Wulff executive director of Alberta Agriculture's trade development division says the mission "is another important building block in developing and expanding Alberta's trade potential."

The mission was led by Barry Mehr, the department's assistant deputy minister responsible for the marketing sector. He was joined on different legs of the mission by Wulff, David Wong, senior international trade director for the Pacific/Asia region and Jeff Kucharski, trade director for the Pacific/Asia region, a specialist in the Japanese market.

Wulff says the mission achieved several objectives.

"One of the main purposes was to follow up on contacts and initiatives established by Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga during his trade mission to Asia last fall," says Wulff.

In Hong Kong trade officials met with staff at the Alberta Hong Kong Office and the Canadian High Commission, along with Hong Kong government and business leaders.

Plans were discussed for two major food promotions, supported by Alberta Agriculture, planned for later this year and early 1989. One promotion of Canadian food products is scheduled for December 1988, while the other will be held in March 1989.

(Cont'd)

In Korea trade officials followed up on relations between Alberta and the National Livestock Experimental Station at Suweon and the twinning agreement between Alberta's Olds College and Korea's Yonam Agricultural College.

In Japan meetings were held at both the Canadian Embassy and the Alberta Tokyo office and trade officials participated in an Alberta beef demonstration project.

Among business contacts, Alberta Agriculture officials met with executives of the Nichiryu Group, a company which represents 12 food retail chains with annual sales of $12 billion (U.S.), which is showing increasing interest in Alberta products.

During stops in China, Alberta representatives met with the Chinese minister of agriculture along with officials of the Bureau of State Farms in Beijing, to discuss future commercial opportunities for the sale of agriculture commodities and services to China.

They also reviewed the progress of Alberta Agriculture's participation in the Qiqihar Rangeland Improvement Project, for which the department provides technical assistance to improve local soil management and forage and livestock production techniques.

In meetings with officials in the province of Heilongjiang, Alberta Agriculture representatives discussed Alberta's role in assisting with a recently announced commercial and resource development project in the Three River Plains area in the northeastern part of the province.

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Contact: Cliff Wulff
427-4241

PFRA adds support to water hauling assistance plan

Alberta farmers forced to haul water during the drought will receive extra assistance with hauling costs following an announcement that the federal government has added its support to a provincial program.

The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) has recently announced it will pay farmers who qualify under the Alberta Water Supplies Assistance program an additional 50 per cent of the grant provided by the provincial plan.

Bruce Olson, co-ordinator of Alberta Agriculture's section of the provincial program, says the PFRA support should be good news for farmers.

"As an example, if a farmer submits a claim for water hauling costs under the provincial program that makes him eligible for a $2,000 grant from the province, he will automatically qualify for an additional 50 per cent or another $1,000 from PFRA," says Olson.

"The farmer needs only to submit one claim to the Alberta Water Supplies Assistance Program, and the PFRA portion will be calculated and paid automatically."

The water hauling assistance program is one part of a comprehensive $23 million provincial program announced earlier this year to help farmers, other rural landowners and communities cope with water shortages caused by the extended dry conditions. The hauling program is jointly administered by Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Environment.

The water hauling assistance program is not intended for producers who routinely haul water for livestock or domestic use, but will help bonafide farmers in situations where the extremely dry conditions have depleted existing water sources such as wells, dugouts and dams.

Olson says, in general terms, the program is intended for those farmers who are out of water because of the drought and are not close enough to a source to pump water, or do not have a storage facility or new source yet developed. As an example it will help farmers who hire tanker trucks to replenish a dugout, or haul water until a new well can be drilled.

(Cont'd)

Olson says the program will also assist producers who might use their own truck to haul water to refill a storage facility. But this type of work, which might continue over several weeks, would be considered as one project. Detailed records would be required and one claim should be submitted when hauling is finished.

Program assistance is available for all water hauling completed between January 1 and December 31, 1988.

Program assistance will be provided on the lesser of:

a. one-third invoiced costs or,
b. 80¢/1000 gal. loaded mile for the first five miles or portion thereof to a maximum of $2,000 or
c. 80¢/1000 gal. loaded mile for the first five miles and 55¢/1000 gal. loaded mile in excess of the first five miles to a maximum of $2,750.

Unit mileage costs are based on the distance from the water source to the water holding facility.

Farmers who hire a contractor to haul water need to supply an invoice and other relevant details about the work. Those producers claiming for costs using their own vehicle to haul water need to keep records of dates hauled, amount of water hauled and distance travelled.

Any applications made under the program will be subject to inspection and the program will not cover the capital cost of vehicles and pumping equipment or maintenance.

Application forms for water hauling assistance are available at all Alberta Agriculture district and regional offices.

For more information on Alberta Agriculture's water supplies assistance contact any district or regional office or Bruce Olson at 427-2181.

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Contact: Bruce Olson
427-2181

Dairy production costs expected to increase

Alberta dairy producers could see further adjustments in fluid milk prices this year if production costs increase, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Market analyst, Al Dooley in his quarterly Dairy Situation and Outlook says the prices paid to producers will probably reflect the increased cost of feeding livestock caused by dry spring conditions.

"In the coming months, feed prices are expected to have a significant influence on fluid milk pricing," says Dooley. "The dry spring has created uncertainty as to the quantity of this year's forage crop, and quality problems could impact on milk production. Inadequate supplies may be reflected in increased milk prices and/or reduced producer returns."

Dooley says producers of Class 1 fluid milk in Alberta experienced two price increases in the 1987-88 dairy year, which ends July 31. The most recent price adjustment in June saw a $.98 per hectolitre increase attributed to increases in farm wage and industrial wage indices.

Under the milk pricing formula, changes in production input costs can trigger changes in the prices paid to producers.

Looking at national production and disappearance figures, Dooley says the trend of increased consumption of low fat milk and cheeses continues, while the use of butter is also expected to be up for the dairy year, for the first time in quite a while.

In the industrial market, the analyst says cheese production has increased in all but the processed cheese category over the August 1987 to April 1980 period. Specialty cheese production continues to grow significantly in response to shifts in consumer tastes. Butter and skim milk powder production registered increases of about two to three per cent.

(Cont'd)

"Sales of homogenized milk declined by about 4.8 per cent to 5.5 million hectolitres while sales of two per cent milk and skim milk trended higher, up an estimated 2.7 per cent and 4.6 per cent respectively," says the specialist. "Lower fat milks now account for about 70 per cent of sales of these three categories."

"Specialty cheese disappearance continues to increase significantly, while butter disappearance is estimated to be up 7.3 per cent from the first three quarters of the 1986-87 dairy year," he adds. "The increase in butter useage would be the first in several years for the period. Promotion of butter by the Dairy Bureau of Canada and the change in Quebec's margarine coloration regulations are thought to be important factors in the increase in usage."

For more information on the dairy situation and outlook contact Al Dooley, dairy and poultry analyst with the market analysis branch at 427-5382.

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Contact: Al Dooley
427-5382

Farm water consumption is greater than most realize

A farm family of four with 40 head of beef cattle living in east-central Alberta will need about 1.25 million gallons of water in storage to carry them through two dry years, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

It may sound like a lot of water, says Neil MacAlpine, a farm water management engineer, but considering the actual water used by each person in the household, plus the requirements of the cattle and the amount of water lost through evaporation, it isn't an unreasonable amount.

MacAlpine says farmers planning dugout construction often don't appreciate just how much water is used and lost in a year from on-farm storage facilities.

"When we start talking about half a million or a million gallons of water it seems like a fantastic amount," says MacAlpine. "But when it comes down to how much is actually used on a daily basis those huge figures don't seem as great.

"In planning a dugout it should first be sized to meet your needs. Alberta Agriculture or PFRA staff can help farmers determine the size and location of dugouts needed for their farm.

"And a two-year water supply is important, to carry producers through dry spells and provide a certain peace of mind. Farmers with less water stored than meets their needs, will always find themselves behind the eight ball during extended dry periods."

MacAlpine says even with a well-designed dugout, evaporation loss over a two-year period - depending on different regions in the province - can amount to between 40 and 80 per cent of the water. He says a producer has to realize that anywhere from the top two or three feet of water in a storage reservoir, will be lost to evaporation in a dry year.

The specialist says each person in a household will use about 22,000 gallons of water a year (this accounts for all cooking, cleaning and washing purposes). The average dairy cow requires about 13,200 gallons of water per year and the average beef cow about 5,500 gallons of water per year. Added to these figures are evaporation losses.

(Cont'd)

Provincial and federal programs will cover up to one-third of dugout construction costs to a maximum of $1,650 per project. Based on an average excavation costs of about $1.20 per cubic metre of earth, the maximum dugout covered under assistance programs would be about 5,670 cubic metres, which would have capacity to store about 1.25 million gallons of water. The minimum size eligbile for benefits under the program is about 2,000 cubic metres.

MacAlpine says the minimum size dugout covered under the Alberta Water Supplies Assistance and PFRA programs would hold only enough water to basically cover a family's domestic needs for two years. He says one minimum size dugout is a good starting point, but will not make a farm drought resistant.

The minimum size dugout covered under assistance programs will hold about 440,000 gallons of water. That dugout, if full, and considering different rates of evaporation losses in different parts of the province, would provide a secure water supply in the Peace River/Edmonton region of about 132,000 gallons of water per year for two years. That water would meet the needs of a family of four with eight beef cows. About 40 per cent would be lost to evaporation

In the Coronation area, the same dugout, after evaporation losses, would provide about 99,000 gallons of water a year for two years, which would meet the needs of a family of four people with two beef cows. Between 40 and 60 per cent would be lost to evaporation.

In the Hanna area, the dugout would produce a net 66,000 gallons of water for each of two years which would meet the needs of three people. Between 60 and 80 per cent or about six feet of water in a dugout 12 to 14 feet deep would be lost to evaporation.

MacAlpine says even building the maximum size dugout covered under assistance programs provides only enough water to support a medium size farming operation for two seasons, if water supplies cannot be replenished.

Based on the 5,670 cubic metre dugout which holds 1.25 million gallons and subtracting the evaporation rates for different regions of the province, varying amounts of water would be available for two years of actual consumption.

(Cont'd)

In the Peace River/Edmonton region the dugout would supply a net 350,000 gallons of water for each of two years which would meet the needs of four people with 48 beef cows.

In the Coronation area it would supply a net 300,000 gallons of water for each of two years, which would meet the needs of four people and 40 beef cows.

In the Hanna area that same 5,670 cubic metre dugout would supply a net 250,000 gallons of water for each of two years, which would meet the needs of four people and 28 beef cows.

MacAlpine says in the Peace River/Edmonton area a dugout large enough to supply a family of four and a 100-head beef herd for two years would have to have a volume of about 9,000 cubic metres which would hold about 2,000,0000 gallons of water.

"While larger is better to minimize evaporation losses, this doesn't mean that people should only build one single dugout to meet their water needs," he says. "But they should develop one or more dugouts from 17 to 20 feet deep, which will provide them with the volume they will require for a two-year water supply."

He says producers wanting to develop a two-year water supply by using dugouts should aim for the maximum size eligible for assistance under Alberta Agriculture and federal Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) programs.

Larger dugouts or greater water storage capacity will be required by producers in drier parts of the province or with livestock operations larger than 40 head of cattle.

The specialist says in developing these large capacity storage facilities the location is critical to maximize the amount of runoff that can be collected. He says farmers should consult Alberta Agriculture or PFRA specialists for help in siting a dugout.

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Contact: Neil MacAlpine
422-4385

For immediate release

Time to register for annual range tour

Both members and non-members are welcomed to participate later this month in the annual three-day summer range tour sponsored by the Alberta chapter of the Society for Range Management.

Headquartered on the Bar K2 Ranch in southern Alberta, this year's tour will feature a plant identification contest, range walk, a talk on local ranching history, a tour of the Bar K2 ranch, a visit to a game ranch, a talk on Indian heritage and the chapter's business meeting.

Planned as a family camp out, the July 21 to 23 tour program gets underway Thursday July 21 with camp set up on the Bar K2 Ranch at 1 p.m.

The Bar K2 (Deseret Ranches Ltd.) is located south of Spring Coulee, about 30 miles south of Lethbridge and about 10 miles north of the U.S. border.

Later that day there will be discussions on plant identification and range condition during a range walk. Local 4-H club members have been invited to attend. At 8 p.m. there will be a talk on local ranching history.

Friday, July 22 will provide a day with local range managers, beginning with a tour of the Bar K2 ranch, a look at native range, improved pastures and a discussion on range management.

The afternoon will involve a visit to Gordon Sherman's Game Ranch, followed by a beef barbecue back at the Bar K2. The evening program conducted by Dr. John Dormaar, soil scientist and ethnologist, will include a talk on "The Indian Heritage of Aloneness - The Vision Quest".

The tour wraps up Saturday morning, July 23, with final judging in the plant identification contest, and a short Alberta chapter business meeting.

Organizers say the "Family Camp Out" includes all meals provided at cost from soup and coffee on Thursday evening July 21 to lunch on Saturday July 23.

(Cont'd)

The Bar K2 Ranch is located about 11 miles south of Spring Coulee on Secondary Road 820. For those travelling from Del Bonita, go west on Secondary Road 501 for 14 miles and then north on Secondary Road 820 for 10 miles.

For more information contact Weldon Thompson at 752-4551 or Barrie Adams at 381-5486.

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Contact: Weldon Thompson 752-4551
Barrie Adams 381-5486

Coming Agriculture Events

Edmonton Regional 4-H Show and Sale
Edmonton Northlands Agricom
Edmonton, Alberta.....July 7 - 8
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede - International Stock Show
Stampede Park
Calgary, Alberta.....July 8 to 17
Ag. Dept. Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Association - 261-0266

Fibre Week
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....July 10 - 15
Extension Services - Olds - 556-8344

Alberta Provincial Agricultural Service Board Tour
Josephburg - Moyer Recreation Complex
County of Strathcona, Alberta.....July 11 - 14
Ian Gray - 464-8113 or Don England - 939-4321

Interior Plantscape Seminar and Tradeshow
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....July 15 - 16
Annelise Doolaege - Olds - 556-8240

Canadian Galloway Association Annual Meeting
Tropical Inn
North Battleford, Saskatchewan.....July 16
Robert Ballantyne - Saskatchewan - 845-2481

Alberta Women's Week
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....July 18 - 20
Fandi Sandbu - 352-1307

Alberta Chapter of the Society of Range Management
Southern Alberta
Lethbridge.....July 21 - 23
Weldon Thompson - 752-4551; Barrie Adams - 381-5486

Edmonton Klondike Days Exposition
Edmonton Northlands/City of Edmonton
Edmonton, Alberta.....July 21 - 30
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

Klondike Days Horse Extravaganza
Edmonton Northlands
Edmonton, Alberta.....July 21 - 30
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

Cont'd)

Alberta Heavy Horse Improvement Program
Alberta Challenge of the Breeds
Edmonton Northlands
Edmonton, Alberta.....July 21 - 25
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

Hort Week - 1988 - 24th Annual
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....July 25 - 29
Annelise Doolaege - Olds - 556-8240

Alberta Dairy Congress
Leduc Curling Club
Leduc, Alberta.....July 26 - 27
Iris Yanish - Leduc - 986-8108

Soil and Water Conservation Society - 43rd Annual Conference
Columbus, Ohio.....July 31 - August 3
John Hermans - Edmonton - 422-4385

Serger Workshop - Overlock Serger
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....August 12 - 14
Extension Services - Olds - 556-8344

International Conference on Dryland Farming
Amarillo/Bushland, Texas.....August 15 - 19
U.S.D.A. Conservation and Production Research Laboratory
P.O. Drawer 10, Bushland, Texas, 79012, U.S.A.

Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center
Annual Field Day
Brooks, Alberta.....August 19
Tom Krahn - Joyce Clark - Brooks - 362-3391

Agriculture Institute of Canada - 1988 Conference
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta.....August 21 - 24
Don Hoover - Edmonton - 421-3611

Western Canadian Economic Conference on the Food Industry
Trade and Convention Centre
Vancouver, B.C.....August 28 - 30
R.E.D.A. - Edmonton - (403) 451-5959

Food Pacific '88
B.C. Place
Vancouver, B.C.....August 30 - September 2
Wilf Walker - Edmonton - 427-4241

(Cont'd)

Equi-Fair
Spruce Meadows
Calgary, Alberta.....September 7 - 11
Bob Coleman - Edmonton - 427-8905

Light Horse Improvement Program
Westerner Exhibition Grounds
Red Deer, Alberta.....Sept. 17 - 18 - Sept. 24 - 25
Bob Coleman - Edmonton - 427-8905; Les Burwash - Calgary - 297-6650

Serger Workshop - Creative Serger
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....October 21 - 23
Extension Services - Olds - 556-8344

Wool and Mohair Workshop
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....November
Extension Services - Olds - 556-8344

Agriculture Education Convention
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....November
Extension Services - Olds - 556-8344

Alberta Horticultural Congress - Second Annual
Terrace Hotel
Edmonton, Alberta.....November 3 - 5
Lloyd Hausher - Brooks - 363-3391

Northlands Farmfair
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton, Alberta.....November 3 - 12
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

International Irrigation Exposition and Technical Conference
"Making Deserts Bloom Worldwide - Panacea or Pandora's Box?"
Las Vegas, Nevada..... November 6 - 9
Akos Pungor - Lethbridge - 381-5140

The Canadian Bankers' Association Agricultural Credit Conference
Westin Bayshore Hotel
Vancouver, B.C. .....November 6 - 9

Canadian Finals Rodeo
Northlands Coliseum
Edmonton, Alberta.....November 9 - 13
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

(Cont'd)

Texas-Alberta Longhorn Show
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton, Alberta.....November 9
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

National Agricultural Employment Conference
Hamilton Convention Centre
Hamilton, Ontario.....November 14 - 18
Denyse Beauchesne - Hull - (819) 953-3404

Agricultual Fieldman Inservice Training Course
Capilano Motor Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....November 21 - 25
Dennis Bergheim - St. Paul - 645-3301

Population Growth in Southern Alberta -
Is There a Water Crisis Coming?"
Lethbridge Lodge Hotel
Lethbridge, Alberta.....November 21 - 23
Jim Webber - Brooks - 362-4532; Akos Pungor - Lethbridge - 381-5145

Christian Farmers Federation of Alberta - Annual Convention
Nisku Inn
Nisku, Alberta.....November 23 - 24
Gus Polman - 428-6981

Canadian Western Agribition
Regina Exhibition Grounds
Regina, Saskatchewan.....November 26 - December 2
Mark Allan - Regina - (306) 565-0565

1989

Second Annual, Alberta Farm Women's Conference
Red Deer, Alberta.....January 25 - 27
Faye Mayberry - Red Deer - 886-4129

Prairie Barley Production Symposium
Crop Development Centre
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.....March 21 - 22
B.G. Rossnagel - Saskatoon - (306) 966-4976

Managaing Agricultural Technology for Profit 1989
Kananaskis Lodge
Mt. Allen, Alberta.....March 5 - 8
Gerde Andres - Olds - 556-4277

Alberta Dairy Seminar
Banff, Alberta.....March 14 - 17
Val Smyth - U of A - Edmonton - 432-2406

(Cont'd)

Coming Agricultural Events

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in September October, November December, 1988 or any events omitted in the attached list? Please state the name of the event.

2. What are the dates? Please be sure to state whether 1988 or 1989.

3. Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the name, city or town, and phone number of a contact person for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization):

Please return this form by August 29, 1988 to:

Print Media Branch
Information Services Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6

(Coming Agricultural Events is published four times a year in Agri-News. The next edition will be printed September 6, 1988.)

AGRI-NEWS

July 11, 1988

For immediate release

CANADIANA
AUG - 3 1988

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Phone: (403) 427-2121

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

For immediate release

Applications available for agricultural research

Application forms are now available for agricultural researchers to submit proposals for projects to be supported by the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute (AARI).

The Institute, a Crown corporation established in 1987, is providing funding through two programs to help further agricultural research work in the province.

Under the Matching Grants Program, the Institute will match dollar-per-dollar private sector contributions for agricultural research projects approved by the Institute's board of directors. Under the Research Coordination Program, the Institute will provide funds to help scientists coordinate their research efforts.

Deadline for submitting applications for both programs is September 1.

Dr. Ralph Christian, the Institute's executive director says application forms and background brochures have already been mailed to many of the research institutions and farm organizations in Alberta, however if anyone was missed or if more copies are needed, they can be obtained from the Institute's headquarters in Edmonton.

The Matching Grants Program is designed to fund research, primarily in co-operation with the private sector, in areas of production efficiency, food processing, marketing, and soil and water resources management and diversification.

Working with a $1 million budget in each fiscal year, the Institute will provide matched funding on approved projects submitted by academic institutions, private companies, federal research agencies, provincial research centres and other institutions, firms, enterprises or individuals approved by the institute.

"As an example, if a university researcher has $15,000 from a source other than the Alberta government to conduct research into some aspect of production which the board feels would be of benefit to Alberta producers, the Institute could provide a matching $15,000 toward the project," says Christian.

(Cont'd)

The Research Coordination Program is designed to encourage a greater exchange of relevant information among and between researchers. Operating with an annual budget of $150,000, it can provide up to $5,000 per year for projects which encourage researcher contact.

"Again, as an example, if a researcher in Edmonton working on a particular project needs to consult with other researchers in Lethbridge, Beaverlodge and Lacombe who are all working in a similar research area, a grant can be provided under the Research Coordination Program," says Christian. "The money would not necessarily be used for direct research work, but could be used to cover travel expenses for planning sessions or work exchanges, establish a computer link or other electronic communications between the different offices, or cover other costs that may be associated with exchanging information between scientists."

The Institute's board of directors, chaired by MLA Bob Bogle, is also interested in helping the agricultural and food industries in Alberta identify and address their research needs, says the executive director.

To achieve this, the Institute is prepared to offer direct assistance to any farm group and agri-business organization willing to fund research of interest to that organization. This might include, for example, helping an organization contact researchers capable of meeting its specific needs.

If appropriate, the Institute is also willing to administer research funds on behalf of private groups and organizations.

Applications for assistance under the grant programs will be evaluated this fall, with the first approved projects expected to be announced before the end of the year.

For more information on the AARI, or for application forms contact, the Alberta Agriculture Research Institute, c/o Research Division, Alberta Agriculture, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6, or call Dr. Christian at 422-1072 or Dr. Yilma Teklemariam, research manager, at 427-1956.

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Contact: Dr. Ralph Christian
422-1072

For immediate release

Agriculture display making second tour

Calgary Stampede visitors who stop at the Alberta Agriculture display this week, will be among more than 25,000 Alberta residents and guests expected to visit the booth this year during its second season.

After launching its 1988 tour in Lethbridge in March, the display is slated to make 16 appearances across Alberta this year, before wrapping up in November with an agricultural trade show in Red Deer.

Sharon Abbott, co-ordinator of the 10-foot by 20-foot floor display, says public response to the exhibit has been positive. She says more than 25,000 people stopped during the 1987 season to view the display and see a video presentation by Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga and Associate Minister Shirley Cripps on the role of agriculture. Public interest so far this year has again been good.

The display graphics and video deal with five areas: the importance of agriculture to the economy; Alberta farm products; feeding the world; challenges in farming; and the government's commitment to agriculture.

The display message is aimed at an urban audience, reinforcing the fact that agriculture is everyone's business. The display theme is "if you eat you are involved in agriculture".

The agriculture display will be at the Calgary Stampede from July 7 to 17 before moving onto Edmonton Klondike Days, July 21 to 30.

The display will be in Camrose August 6 and 7 for the Camrose Regional Exhibition; Barrhead, August 12 and 13 and Westlock, August 19 and 20 for their summer fairs and trade shows.

In September the agriculture display will be set up at EQUI-FAIR at Spruce Meadows in Calgary, September 7 to 11, before heading to the Drumheller Stampede in October and a purebred cattle show in Lloydminster in November. The display completes its season at the annual Agri Trade Exposition in Red Deer, also in November.

(Cont'd)

Earlier this year the display appeared at seed fairs in Lethbridge and Grande Prairie, at trade fairs in Wetaskiwin, Sherwood Park and Brooks, at the Alberta Pork Congress in Red Deer and the Exhibitat '88 trade show in St. Paul.

Abbott says along with providing information on the role of agriculture, the display also offers visitors a chance to win prizes.

Correctly filling out a contest questionnaire entitles visitors at each location a chance to win a draw for a $50 food hamper. Ten food hampers will be given away during both the Calgary Stampede and Edmonton Klondike Days. As well, display visitors in these two major centres will have a chance to win one of two country vacations offered as grand prizes by Alberta Tourism.

For more information on the display contact Alberta Agriculture information services division at 427-2127 in Edmonton.

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Contact: Sharon Abbott
427-2127

For immediate release

Alberta needs to maintain trade profile

Alberta must maintain a high profile in the Pacific-Asia marketplace if it is to take advantage of developing trade opportunities, says an Alberta Agriculture trade official.

Cliff Wulff, executive director of the department's market development division, says although there is stiff competition among producing nations vying for a share of the multi-billion Asian market, Alberta can compete.

Wulff, who has just returned from a three-week trade mission to four Asian countries says the opportunities for sale of Alberta food and agricultural commodities in countries such as Japan, Korea and the People's Republic of China are just emerging.

He says changes are ocurring almost daily in the policies of Pacific-Rim nations, with the doors to many markets being opened.

"But if we are going to take advantage of those opportunities we have to be there and we have to be known," says Wulff. "We have to make their companies and their governments aware of the range and quality of products we have to sell. There is tremendous potential to increase our trade, but we have to be on top of the market."

Wulff, who has just returned to his market development post after a 30-month exchange with Dennis Glover, the director of marketing services division, says he is impressed with the new openness that exists in Asian countries.

"Not only could I see the changes that have taken place in Korea and Japan, but I could also sense a whole new attitude in all the countries we visited."

The department trade officials recently visited Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China. These Asia-Pacific countries last year imported about $720 million worth of food and agricultural products from Alberta. Japan was the leader with imports of about $354 million, followed by China with $173 million, and South Korea with $60 million in agricultural imports.

(Cont'd)

"What struck me most was how quickly Japan and Korea have opened up and how their economies have changed," said Wulff. "There is a new prosperity and a growing demand for the products we have to offer. Korea as an example, has seen 12 per cent real growth in its economy in each of the last two years."

Wulff said he was also impressed with the openness of Hong Kong and China and the increasing liberalization of the amount and type of products that can be imported.

However, he says competition in the key market areas is keen, with the United States acting as Alberta's greatest rival for market share followed closely by Australia and New Zealand.

Price isn't the only factor that determines whether sales are made. The quality of products - their healthfulness, safety and natural purity - are also important. As well Asian buyers look at other aspects such as the value they are getting for their dollar and the supplier's ability to deliver goods as required.

"Markets are changing, but new opportunities don't happen over night," says Wulff. "It is important for Alberta to maintain a presence in these countries and develop a trustful relationship. Then as opportunities do come along they will look our way."

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Contact: Cliff Wulff
427-4241

For immediate release

Former Willingdon farmer named Innisfail DA

A former Willingdon area farmer, who recently graduated from the University of Alberta, has been appointed the new Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist in Innisfail.

Grant Lastiwka, who was born and raised on the family mixed farm at Willingdon, has taken over the Innisfail post replacing Ted Darling, who was earlier named the regional farm economist headquartered in Red Deer.

Lastiwka's appointment was announced by Alan Hall, director of Alberta Agriculture's north central region.

Prior to attending university, the new DA farmed for seven years, including two years on his own and five years in partnership with his brother.

He graduated from the U of A this spring with a bachelor of science degree in agriculture with a major in agricultural economics.

Along with farming, his other work experience includes summer employment as a Farm Credit Corporation credit advisor in Lacombe and summer DA at Morinville.

In his new post, Lastiwka will provide a wide range of services to Innisfail area farmers in areas of crop and livestock production, marketing and farm business management.

Lastiwka, who is married, lives in Innisfail.

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Contact: Grant Lastiwka
227-6565

For immediate release

New animal pedigree act good for livestock industry

The new Animal Pedigree Act is a good piece of legislation for the livestock industry, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Bill C-67, which was proclaimed into law earlier this month, accommodates all facets of the livestock industry, says Les Burwash, supervisor of the department's horse industry branch in Calgary.

The new Act, which updates the long-standing Livestock Pedigree Act, will also "enhance the standard by which all pedigree animal associations and owners conduct business," he says.

Burwash says the Act involves some significant changes for both the purebred and commercial livestock industry, particularly in the area of selling animals and transfer of registration, but notes these changes will not create a hardship for either segment.

"The act had been worked on by the federal government since 1984," says Burwash. "At that time, all breed associations were asked for input into changes to the act.

"The new act which was first tabled in June 1987, in my opinion, was inappropriate and would have been harmful to the entire livestock industry in Canada. Once the livestock industry saw what was being proposed, they rallied around the need for amendments which were ultimately implemented.

"I am happy to report that the new Animal Pedigree Act is now an excellent piece of legislation."

The new act covers all classes of livestock from dogs to horses, to cattle. The only livestock not covered in the provisions are poultry and cats.

(Cont'd)

Burwash has highlighted several features of Act which is now in effect:

1. A breed association can be incorporated if the animals have significant value in the opinion of the federal Minister of Agriculture. The association must represent all breeders in Canada and number five or more.
2. Only one association per breed can maintain records and issue certificates.
3. Associations may keep records and issue certificates on semen and embryos.
4. Major changes in registrations include:
   a) Breeds that are purebreds must indicate the percentage pure on the papers and for the Act, 7/8 is considered pure.
   b) Non purebred breeds are not required to state percentage pure but must trace inheritance to foundation stock of the breed.
   c) Evolving breeds will only be issued certificates of identification until sufficient numbers to apply for established breed status.
5. Establishes Canada Livestock Records Corporation (CLRC) to replace Canadian National Livestock Records to provide services to member associations and to individuals via general stud and herd books where no association exists. CLRC is not an agent of the crown.
6. Any association may now, with permission from the minister, authorize any other association to maintain its records and registry instead of CLRC or the Canadian Kennel Club if it cannot provide the services to its members itself.
7. No person can be denied the right to register and/or transfer animals unless he is in arrears on fees, or contravenes bylaws of the association, the Animal Pedigree Act or the Animal Diseases and Protection Act.
8. No person can offer to sell, contract to sell an animal as registered or identified unless it is or eligible to be so. Foreign registered animals must be so stated. Example - U.S. registered Quarter Horse.

(Cont'd)

9. No person can sell or offer to sell or contract to sell in a manner that gives the impression the animal is registered. Example - commercial Herefords or unregistered Arab.
10. Seller must transfer registration papers to the new owner within six months of the date of sale. This can only be changed by having a written bill of sale stating other arrangements between buyer and seller.
11. The new act has some teeth providing for fines up to $50,000 for an indictable offence.

For more information on the Animal Pedigree Act contact Les Burwash in Calgary at 297-6650.

-30-

Contact: Les Burwash
297-6650

Plan to attend field day at Brooks

The public is invited to the 26th annual field day at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center at Brooks, August 19.

Tours, lectures, films, demonstrations, and clinics are on the program for visitors attending the event at the centre five kilometres east of Brooks on the Highway No. 1.

Commercial horticulture and special crop production is the theme of the 1988 field day. Emphasis will be placed on the commercial industry with some of the equipment used and the products made on display.

There will be a display of fruit and vegetable leathers, along with an explanation of the home dehydration process used to make these leathers. Other displays will include aspects of home greenhouses, soils and irrigation.

Participants will be urged to taste a good quality potato chip and find out why it got that way, as well see samples of a variety of other Alberta food products.

Pruning lectures and flower arranging demonstrations will be conducted during the day.

Visitors attending the field day may bring samples to the plant pest clinic to have disease, weed, and insect pest problems identified and control recommendations provided.

The research centre is known for providing research and extension information to the commercial horticulture and special crops industry in Alberta and to specialists across Western Canada who work with these crops.

Visitors are reminded to be prepared for some walking on the site. A special walking tour is provided to take visitors through the arboretum and other demonstration areas.

Refreshments and fresh corn will be provided. Some food services will be on sale or guests may bring their own picnic lunch.

For further details on the program, write the ASCHRC at Bag Service 200, Brooks, Alberta T0J 0J0 or call the centre's hostess at 362-3391.

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Contact: Colin McKenzie or Joyce Clark
362-3391
Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

July 11, 1988
For immediate release

New 4-H agriculture specialist appointed

ARLENE ROSS

An agrologist with more than 13 years experience as a member and leader of 4-H clubs has been appointed to a newly created position with the Alberta Agriculture 4-H branch in Edmonton.

Arlene Ross, a native of Bolton, Ontario, a community north of Toronto, has joined the branch as the 4-H agriculture specialist.

Ross will be providing technical direction on new and existing 4-H programs.

Her appointment was announced by Ted Youck, head of the 4-H branch in Edmonton.

In her new position Ross will be working with long-time provincial agricultural specialist Henry Wiegman in developing and updating 4-H livestock and field crops project manuals and related resource materials. She will also assist regional staff at agriculture-related project workshops.

Born and raised on the family dairy farm near Bolton, Ross received her bachelor of science degree in agriculture with a major in animal science from the University of Guelph, graduating in 1984.

She worked for Westeel Agricultural Products in Toronto before moving to Edmonton with her husband in 1985. She spent about three years with Federated Co-operatives in Edmonton involved in both sales and purchasing in the company's feed division.

(Cont'd)

Along with her many years of 4-H experience in Ontario as both a member and a leader, Ross's background includes youth work with the Junior Farmer's Association, the Canadian Jersey Cattle Club, development of the Jersey Youth Scholarship and promotion of youth involvement in the Bolton Fall Fair.

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Contact: Arlene Ross
427-2541

For immediate release

Battle Lake Centre open to the public

The Alberta 4-H Foundation's Battle Lake Centre is now open for bookings by the general public.

Following the recent hiring of full-time facilities managers, the foundation's president, Herman Grosfield has announced the centre will be available for rent by any Alberta groups or associations.

The centre, located on a 143 acre site, 35 miles west of Wetaskiwin on the southwest shore of Battle Lake, has been under development for the past 11 years.

The facility, built as an environmental and outdoor learning centre, has a main building, which houses dining and recreational facilities, as well as dormitory facilities for 90 people.

The latest move to expand access to the centre facilities was made possible through the hiring of husband and wife team, John McKechnie and Adele Reichert, as facility caretakers and managers.

As a former northwest region 4-H specialist, Reichert is a familiar face for many involved in the Alberta 4-H program. Leaving that position after spending about four years in the Barrhead regional office, she says one of her first priorities is to help promote the centre and its newly expanded role.

McKechnie, with several years experience in the building trade and a keen interest in all areas of carpentry, brings a variety of skills to the position. He also managed his own small grounds keeping business for serveral years.

The couple will be living on site in temporary accomodations, although the foundation says its next major construction project will be to build a permanent manager's residence.

For more information on the Battle Lake Centre and its facilities contact Iris Plamondon at Alberta Agriculture's 4-H branch in Edmonton at 427-2541 or Adele Reichert at 682-2153.

(Cont'd)

Battle Lake Centre open to the public (cont'd)

Herman Grosfield, left, president of the Alberta 4-H Foundation turns over the keys to the Battle Lake Centre to the new facility managers, Adele Reichert and John McKechnie. The centre is now open for bookings by groups and associations.

Herman Grosfield, president of the Alberta 4-H Foundation accepts a donation from MacKenzie Jaims and Deanna Brown of the Tofield Laughs and Crafts 4-H Club. The money will be used for continuing development at the foundation's Alberta 4-H Centre, Battle Lake.

Contact: Iris Plamondon
427-2541

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(Cont'd)

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Contact: Iris Plamondon
427-2541

Agri-News Briefs

ALBERTA 4-H DELEGATES IN MONTANA

Four senior Alberta 4-H delegates and leaders have just begun a 10-day trip to Montana to meet state 4-H officials and learn more about agriculture on both sides of the border. Tracey Arntzen of Sedgewick, Jodi Robertson of Cochrane, Ronald Simon of Bow Island, and Neil Stringer of Sunnynook, along with Myrna Lemay 4-H leader from Grande Prairie and Susan Morris, regional 4-H specialist at Red Deer are attending the Montana 4-H Congress in Bozeman. The group left July 8 and will return July 17. During the trip they will participate in the conference seminars as well as tour agriculture operations both in Alberta and Montana. This is the 41st year Alberta Agriculture has sponsored the 10-day trip. The delegates were named at the 4-H Selections program in Olds in May.

FORAGE I.D. TOUR PLANNED

Farmers in north-central Alberta are invited to participate in two half-day native forage identification tours in July planned by the Alberta Agriculture district office in Lacombe. July 19, farmers are to meet at Spotted Lake, near Mirror for a morning session of identifying lowland forage species. Dr. Charles Bird, a farmer at Mirror will lead the discussion on management of quality forage production. To reach the tour site go four miles north of Mirror, then one mile west and one and a half miles south. Later in the month, an identification of upland native forage species will he held at the Collett Natural Area near Morningside. This morning program on July 25 lead by Bob Wroe, Alberta Agriculture's range management specialist, will identify upland forage species as well as discuss management practices to produce long-term quality grazing. To reach this site from Lacombe, go four miles north on Highways 2A and 2, east across the tracks, north one mile and east one mile. Participants are welcome to bring their lunch, or just head home after the tour. For more information contact the Lacombe district office at 782-3301.

(Cont'd)

FORAGE TOUR PLANNED NEAR PINCHER CREEK

Southern Alberta farmers still have time to register for the day-long Foothills Forage Tour, planned in the Pincher Creek area, July 28. The tour will feature four stops during the day to look at range improvement projects, forage varietal plots and ranch management. Two buses, one at the Twin Butte Community Hall and the other at the Pincher Creek provincial government building will depart at 9 a.m. for the first stop of the day - a look at a forested area that has been converted to tame pasture. Other stops will include a look at a brush control project, and forage varietal trial plots. During the final stop of the day at the Cloudy Ridge Ranch, participants will see how wind power is used to pump water and hear a talk on ranch management. Registration fee is $15. For more information call Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist Bob Lyons at 627-4023.

PEA VARIETIES FEATURED IN CENTRAL ALBERTA TOUR

Central Alberta producers are urged to attend an afternoon tour of field pea variety plots and management demonstrations, July 18 in the Lacombe area. Sponsored by the Central Alberta Pulse Growers Association and Alberta Agriculture, the tour gets underway at 12:30 p.m. from the Albert Agriculture Field Crops Research Centre, two kilometres south of Lacombe. The bus will make several stops during the afternoon, for a look at different pea varieties, seeding rates and management techniques. Cost is $15 per person which includes the bus and a 5:30 p.m. barbecue. Pre-registration is requested by July 14. For more information contact Neil Miller, Lacombe district agriculturist at 782-3301 or 342-2813.

LETHBRIDGE/VULCAN AREA PULSE MINI TOUR PLANNED

A half-day tour of pulse crop production north of Lethbridge has been planned by Alberta Agriculture for July 26. Beginning at 9 a.m. the tour will make its first stop at a pea variety and alternative crops trial plots near MacLean Livestock, immediately southwest of Picture Butte. Other stops during the day will include a look at lupin varieties near Barons, alternative crops near Carmangay and pea variety trials near Lomond. Participants must supply their own transportation and lunch. For more information contact Blair Roth in Lethbridge at 381-5127.

(Cont'd)

TABER HEADQUARTERS FOR SOUTHERN PULSE TOUR

Both growers and potential growers of pulse crops are urged to participate in an afternoon tour of new crop varieties and harvesting techniques in the Taber/Bow Island area, July 28. Beginning at 1 p.m. with registration at the Alberta Agriculture district office, in Taber,the bus tour will include a look at varieties of field peas, dry beans and lupins, as well as weed control projects and a demonstration of a John Deere combine with a flexible cutterbar. A barbecue sponsored by Elanco, and the Pulse Growers Association of Alberta will follow. Registration fee is $10 per person for non-members of the Pulse Growers Association. To pre-register contact Jack Payne in Taber at 223-9611, Ken MacPhail in Bow Island at 545-2233 or Blair Roth in Lethbridge at 381-5127.

ALBERTA DAIRY CONGRESS - A FAMILY EVENT

Final plans are being completed for the second annual Alberta Dairy Congress in Leduc July 26 and 27. The congress will feature one of the most comprehensive dairy trade shows in Alberta, educational seminars, equipment displays and door prizes. Held at the Leduc Curling Complex, the congress will also host the Western Canadian Classic Junior Dairy Show. Seminars covered during the two days will includes talks on bovine growth hormones, cow identification and record keeping systems, silage production, nutrition information, forage production, and financial and estate planning. For more information contact the dairy congress office in Leduc at 986-8108.

(Cont'd)

NEW BOOK HELPS IN PLANNING CAREERS

The University of Alberta in Edmonton is developing a publication to help people search for jobs or plan careers in agriculture and forestry. The "Focus on Agriculture and Forestry" book is designed to act as a job search information resource, and career planning tool, for students alumni and other people interested in pursuing a career in this broad and diversified field. It will present comprehensive information on the job search, approaching employers, writing resumes and interviewing. "Focus on Agriculture and Forestry" will also include articles outlining the career options open to students or faculty graduates. It will be marketed to secondary and post-secondary institutions across Canada. The readership will provide participating companies an opportunity to communicate their employment needs to a large labor force. It will also allow students from across Canada to become more familiar with a range of different employers. Employers wanting more information, or wishing to be profiled in "FOCUS on Agriculture and Forestry" should contact Jack Middleton at Career and Placement Services, on campus at the University of Alberta. Phone (403) 432-4291.

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AGRI-NEWS

July 18, 1988

For immediate release

CANADIANA
AUG 29 1988

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

July 18, 1988
For immediate release

Canada/Alberta Greenfeed Program announced

On July 6, Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga announced that provincial support had been approved for the livestock drought assistance programs announced by the federal government on June 30.

"The Canada/Alberta Greenfeed Program is one of three major components of these programs," says Ken Spiller, director of Alberta Agriculture's animal industry division.

"The other components include assistance on a per head basis for producers with livestock where forage yield has been reduced by the 1988 drought and a tax deferral for 1988 income derived from weather-related distress sales of breeding stock," he says.

As an incentive to encourage production of additional summer and winter livestock feed supplies, and to encourage soil conservation, Alberta farmers can qualify for a payment of $15 per acre for eligible annual crops planted for forage purposes. The eligible crops include wheat, oats, barley, rye, peas, canola, rapeseed, fababeans, millet, triticale, sorghum, sorghum-sudan and all annual grasses such as annual ryegrass.

To be eligible, the applicant must be operating a farm in Alberta and have planted an annual crop, using good crop husbandry methods, during the period from June 21 to July 31, 1988. On rented land, only the lessee may apply and receive payment.

The crops must be made available for use as hay, silage or pasture. If the crops are seeded into a field that has been insured by the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation, an unseeded strip must be left for appraisal purposes or a release obtained from the Corporation before the new crop is seeded.

Applications for the program must be received in the local Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation office by the close of business on August 2, 1988.

(Cont'd)

Canada/Alberta Greenfeed Program announced (cont'd)

Farmers who apply must agree to inspection of the lands and crops shown on the application. It will also be the applicant's responsibility to notify the local Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation office when the crop is ready for inspection, to verify that it is used as forage.

Crops used for hay or silage must be inspected after harvest so that the appraiser can verify the yield. Pastured crops must be inspected while animals are grazing on it. If the crop is not worth harvesting, the farmer should contact the Corporation to have an appraiser verify the field as a write-off to qualify for a payment of $15 per acre.

The Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation will consider fallow land, on which no other crop was grown in 1988, as summerfallow for 1989 crop insurance purposes, even if it was seeded to a forage crop under this program.

In view of the per head payment under the 1988 Livestock Drought Assistance Program, and the incentives for additional forage production under the greenfeed program, there will be no feed freight assistance program, says Spiller.

Details of the two other components of the federal-provincial programs of drought aid for livestock a producers will be provided in future announcements.

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Contact: Ken Spiller
Alberta Agriculture
427-5091

Glen Gorrell
Alberta Hail and Crop
Insurance Corporation
782-4661

July 18, 1988
For immediate release

Grimshaw 4-H member wins conservation award

Laura Pimm of Grimshaw has been chosen to receive the 1988 Grant MacEwan Conservation Award for her efforts in spreading the conservation message in her community.

More than 12 entries were submitted by young people from across the province who participated in the annual Alberta 4-H Conservation Camp in 1987.

After completing the camp program, Pimm actively promoted conservation during the year through a variety of projects, which included organizing information evenings in the community, giving speeches to local groups, setting up a display at a fair, making a poster and putting together part of a float in the town parade.

Henry Wiegman, Alberta Agriculture's provincial 4-H agriculture specialist who co-ordinated the competition, says Pimm's project was the most ambitious and comprehensive of the entries submitted this year.

"It was a lot of work, " says Laura, when she heard the news, "but conservation is something I am really committed to."

The Grant MacEwan Conservation Award was established in 1975 in honor of the former provincial lieutenant-governor, who has championed conservation all his life, says Wiegman.

"His outstanding contributions to mankind as a conservationist led to the introduction of the award 13 years ago," he says. Each year a graduate of the 4-H conservation camp who makes his or her own outstanding contribution through personal effort in spreading the conservation message is presented with a sculptured plaque in recognition of their work.

The camp and award are sponsored annually by Alberta Power Limited and TransAlta Utilities Corporation and administered by the 4-H branch. Along with the plaque the winner receives a $300 cash prize and an invitation to attend the Alberta Junior Citizen of the Year Awards banquet in Edmonton this September.

(Cont'd)

Grimshaw 4-H member wins conservation award (cont'd)

This year about 58 Alberta delegates and 10 guests from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Montana attended the 23rd annual Alberta 4-H Conservation Camp at the 4-H Centre, at Battle Lake, July 9 to 15.

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Contact: Henry Wiegman
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Alberta Power Limited
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TransAlta Utilities
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July 18, 1988
For immediate release

Alberta 4-H members attend conservation camp

Fifty-four Alberta 4-H members along with 10 guests from Montana, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, have completed a one-week program in north-central Alberta with a new dedication to promote resource conservation practices.

The 4-H members from across the province were participating in the 23rd Alberta 4-H Conservation Camp at the Provincial 4-H Centre, Battle Lake, west of Wetaskiwin.

The July 9 to 15 camp, sponsored by TransAlta Utilities and Alberta Power Limited delivers a multifaceted message to participants, says Henry Wiegman, Alberta Agriculture's provincial 4-H agriculture specialist and camp director.

"4-H members gather at the camp to discuss issues affecting the environment and to learn how to preserve the natural resources," he says. "When they leave they take a new-found knowledge of soils, water, fish and wildlife, range and forestry management that they can share with their local clubs and communities.

"The theme of the camp, "five is one", represents the concept that a true conservationist is concerned with the uniqueness and interdependence of soil, water, forest, range and fish and wildlife.

"This camp provides an opportunity to gather information about our abundant natural resources and to identify avenues through which participants can voice concern and affect change. Perhaps more than ever before, Alberta's future is dependent upon strong leaders, well-versed in the intricacies of managing our renewable and non-renewable resources."

Instructors for the seven-day camp include representatives from Olds College, Alberta Environment, Alberta Fish and Wildlife branch, Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

Participants, representing all regions of the province, are involved in a series of study sessions, field trips and projects which help show the relationship and between natural resources.

(Cont'd)

Wiegman says one of long-lasting benefits of the camp is the comittment of participants to promote the conservation message in their local communities.

"All camp members are urged to return home and during the next year conduct programs that help promote the resource conservation concept," says Wiegman.

"Members are also urged to keep a record of their activities and submit an entry for the annual Grant MacEwan Conservation Award. The person who judges feel has developed the most effective conservation awareness program over the year, will receive the conservation award."

The award, which is also sponsored by TransAlta and Alberta Power, includes a sculptured plaque, along with a $300 cash award.

For more information on the Alberta 4-H Conservation Camp contact Henry Wiegman in Edmonton at 427-4521.

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Contact: Henry Wiegman
427-4521

Check water analyses for mineral concentration

Producers who have already had the quality of the farm dugout water tested should see if mineral concentrations present a health risk to livestock.

An Alberta Agriculture specialist has prepared a chart which shows what level of minerals can cause problems in poultry, cattle, sheep and swine.

Dr. Gordon Chalmers, with the department's regional veterinary lab in Lethbridge, says farmers should check their water analyses for figures that indicate the total dissolved solids, shown as parts per million.

"An evaluation of the suitability of water for livestock is based mainly on the amount or concentration of total dissolved solids in the water." says Chalmers. "These dissolved solids are composed of minerals such as sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron, and others, as well as the carbonates, sulfates and chlorides.

"The values for these minerals in water are expressed in parts per million (ppm), and certain basic judgments about the suitability of the water for livestock can be made by examining the figure for total dissolved solids.

"As drought conditions result in increased use as well as evaporation of water from dugouts, the concentration of dissolved solids increases and accordingly, the water becomes less and less suitable for livestock that are forced to utilize such supplies."

Analytical results of water samples also include information on hardness. For example, a hardness value under 100 ppm indicates soft water, and one in the range of 100 - 2000 ppm indicates hard water. Chalmers says fortunately, the hardness of the water is not important in terms of livestock health.

Figures for sulfates and chloride are also given in ppm. Values under 500 ppm do not cause problems in livestock; however, sulfate values ranging from 500 - 3300 ppm create a laxative effect, and those above 3300 ppm render the water unsuitable for livestock.

(Cont'd)

The following table provides some practical guidelines for livestock producers who have obtained analyses of existing water supplies:

TOTAL DISSOLVED SOLIDS (ppm)	USEFULNESS FOR LIVESTOCK
0 - 1,500	Very good water for all animals including turkey poults
1,500 - 3,000	Good water for all animals except turkey poults under three weeks of age
3,000 - 4,000	Fair water usable by all animals.
4,000 - 5,000	Poor water, but usable by all cattle, sheep, swine, and horses.
5,000 - 7,000	Unsatisfactory water that can cause potential health problems. Often produces diarrhea on first introduction. Usable, with reservations, for cattle, growing and finishing swine, sheep and horses.
7,000 - 10,000	Highly unsatisfactory water that can be tolerated by adult cattle, sheep and swine, but not recommended because of hazard to health
over 10,000	Serious hazard to health and not recommended for any livestock

Information on water quality, is also available in two Alberta Agriculture publications, "Chemical Analysis of Water for Livestock Use", Agdex 400/65-1 and "Water Analysis Interpretation" Agdex 410/716-2. These are available from district offices or by writing, The Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Contact: Dr. Gordon Chalmers
381-5190

For immediate release

Water quality in dugouts should be tested

Farmers in drought stricken areas are advised to have dugout water tested to make sure there isn't a concentration of minerals in the water that could be harmful to livestock.

A specialist with Alberta Agriculture says as water levels in dugouts drop through use and evaporation, naturally occurring minerals in the water tend to concentrate.

Dr. Gordon Chalmers, a veterinarian with the department's regional veterinary lab in Lethbridge, says certain concentrations of minerals can be harmful to turkeys, cattle, sheep and swine.

He says the best way to make sure the water quality isn't a problem is to have it tested at a government or private laboratory.

"The drought in southern and other areas of Alberta is raising concerns not only about the general availability of water for livestock, but also the quality of the water that is available," says Chalmers. "Water supplies for livestock, especially for cattle on pasture, may become more critical as water levels in dugouts decrease. One problem with reduced supplies of water is that, with continuing evaporation, the minerals that are naturally present, become increasingly concentrated and as a result can cause health problems in livestock."

The specialist says the problems can range from excess accumulations of fluid, called "waterbelly", in the tissues and abdomen of turkey poults and chicks, to a degenerative condition called "polio" in the brains of cattle and sheep.

"Depending on the results of water analyses, livestock producers may have to obtain alternate sources of supply, such as streams and irrigation canals, to dilute or replace the unsuitable water that may be present in existing dugouts in a drought situation," says Chalmers.

(Cont'd)

"It is important that farmers and ranchers be aware of potential problems that can occur in livestock as water supplies in dugouts become increasingly depleted. If there is any uncertainty about the suitability of a water source for livestock, particularly during a drought, producers should obtain a representative sample of water in a clean quart jar and submit it, along with a $15 fee for analysis."

Water samples can be tested through private analytical laboratories, or forwarded to a government laboratory via a local veterinary practitioner, Alberta Agriculture district offices or department veterinary laboratories in Airdrie, Edmonton, Fairview and Lethbridge.

Information on water quality, is also available in copies of two Alberta Agriculture publications, "Chemical Analysis of Water for Livestock Use", Agdex 400/65-1 and the fact sheet, "Water Analysis Interpretation" Agdex 410/716-2. These are available from district offices or by writing The Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Dr. Gordon Chalmers
381-5190

July 18, 1988
For immediate release

Trade statistician appointed by Alberta Agriculture

DARCY WILLIS

A native of the Hanna/Castor area and a graduate of the University of the Alberta in Edmonton, has been appointed trade statistician with Alberta Agriculture.

Darcy Willis, 32, who was born and raised in the southeastern Alberta communities, has taken over his new post, replacing Bill Schissel who is now the department's senior agriculture statistican.

Willis' appointment was announced by Chuck Sterling, head of the statistics branch.

In his new position, Willis with compile, analyze and disseminate a wide range of statistical information involving imports and exports of agricultural and food products to and from Alberta.

He will monitor trends, issues and policies which influence international trade, and prepare regular reports of use to Alberta Agriculture specialists including the trade policy secretariat, market development and marketing services division. The trade statistics are also of value to Alberta's agriculture food processors and many producers.

After completing high school, Willis worked in the retail business in Calgary for four years before taking two years of general studies at the University of Calgary. Later transferring to the University of Alberta, he obtained his bachelor of science degree in agriculture, with a major in agriculture economics in 1985.

Prior to joining Alberta Agriculture, he worked as a meat trader with Canada Packers in Red Deer for about three years.

He gained good insight into the fundamentals of farming by obtaining summer employment as a farm hand during his university years.

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Contact: Darcy Willis
427-4041

For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

4-H'ERS RETURNING FROM EXCHANGE

Alberta 4-H members from High River, Cherhill, Pincher Creek, Drayton Valley and Coronation were expected to be returning home today after 14 day exchange trips to other Canadian provinces. The five club members who left July 5, were participating in the 26th 4-H Interprovincial Exchange sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada. The Alberta representatives were among 47 4-H members from all 10 provinces participating in the program. The Alberta delegates included May Gourley of High River who travelled to Manitoba; Teresa Burlet of Cherhill who travelled to Ontario; Todd Gilmore of Pincher Creek who travelled to Prince Edward Island; Molly Davie of Drayton Valley who travelled to Nova Scotia and Naomi Tkach of Coronation who travelled to New Brunswick. The exchange provides delegates with an opportunity to experience customs and lifestyles of Canadians from other provinces.

"PEAS FOR PROFIT" FEATURE OF SUMMER TOUR

Alberta farmers interested in pea production and wanting to save a few dollars should plan to register early for a tour of field pea variety plots in Alberta Agriculture's northwest region in August. The tour cost is $20 for those who register before July 29 and $25 after that date. The day-long tour, August 4, in the Westlock - Barrhead area will focus on new pea varieties. Beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Hazel Bluff Hall, west of Westlock, the Peas for Profit - 1988 Summer Tour will feature a look at 28 pea varieties being grown in a trial project for grain production and four varieties being tested for silage production. There will also be a look at fertility and innoculation trials and stops at various fields of peas in the area. The day is being co-ordinated by the Pulse Growers' Association of Alberta - Northern Branch. For information contact Alberta Agriculture district offices in Westlock at 349-4465, Barrhead at 674-8213, Morinville at 939-4351 or Stony Plain at 963-6101.

(Cont'd)

SAFFLOWER PRODUCTION FEATURED ON TOUR

Farmers interested in alternative crops are welcome to participate in a day-long tour August 5 of safflower production and variety trials in southern Alberta. Beginning at 9 a.m. at the Agriculture Canada research station in Lethbridge, tour stops will include a look at variety and herbicide trials near Nobleford and a look at Agriculture Canada irrigated and dryland research trials near Lethbridge. Elanco is sponsoring a barbecue following the tour, at the Lethbridge research station. For more information contact Blair Roth in Lethbridge at 381-5127.

CROPS RESEARCH FIELD DAY AUGUST 4

Alberta Agriculture's field crops branch will be hosting a crops research field day August 4 at 1 p.m. at the Alberta Field Crops Research Centre. The centre is located one mile south of Lacombe on the east side of Highway 2A. The field day will offer guided tours of plots and an opportunity to meet with plant breeders. For more information contact the field crops branch at 782-4641.

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Phone: (403) 427-2121

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

For immediate release

Potential nitrate poisoning conditions exist

Nitrate poisoning has been a concern for Alberta livestock producers for many years. Although frequently there are reports of farmers or ranchers losing animals to nitrate poisoning, this is usually the exception rather than the rule.

According to Alberta Agriculture laboratory nutritionist, Barry Yaremcio, almost all feeds containing nitrate can be safely fed to livestock if managed properly. He says testing for nitrate content and handling the situation accordingly is the key.

How nitrates accumulate in plants

Nitrate is taken up by the plant roots and is used as the main building blocks for the production of protein and other nitrogen compounds. When the system is working correctly, most of the nitrate is converted to protein in the leaves.

"Problems arise when the roots supply more nitrate than the leaves are able to convert into protein," says Yaremcio. "When this happens, nitrate accumulates in the plant."

He says weather and other environmental conditions can affect the plant's ability to use nitrate. For example, when hail damages the leaves and stems, the root system maintains its ability to transport the nitrate to the upper plant. However, leaves are less able to convert nitrate to protein, thus nitrate accumulates with the passage of time.

A frost-damaged plant reacts in the same manner as a hailed crop--the upper plant is damaged while the roots remain unaffected.

Crops receiving a high level of nitrogen fertilizer application are more prone to nitrate accumulation. Chemical fertilizers, manure, legume plowdown or sewage sludge provide large amounts of nitrates to the soil. This readily available source of nitrates is taken up by the roots much more rapidly than the plant can use, and the excess nitrate is stored in the leaves. This condition is intensified in a prolonged dry period.

(Cont'd)

Nitrate poisoning

When ruminant animals consume nitrate-rich feed, either as fresh material or hay, the rumen bacteria convert the nitrate to nitrite. The nitrite is absorbed into the bloodstream. In the red blood cells, haemoglobin, the material that transports oxygen to various body tissues, is modified by nitrite, rendering it incapable of transporting oxygen. As more haemoglobin is bound to nitrite, the animal is starved of oxygen and begins to suffocate.

How quickly the animal eats, the amount of feed consumed and the level of nitrate present in the feed will determine the seriousness of the situation. With time, the animals can become adapted and can tolerate larger amounts of nitrate in feeds.

Feed reports

Alberta Agriculture's agricultural soils and animal nutrition lab has been using the NO3 test to report the nitrate content of feeds since 1981. Prior to 1981 the KNO3 test was used. Yaremcio says records over the years indicate that samples containing nitrate have been up to 70 per cent of total submissions (i.e., oat hay) but the potentially toxic feeds have been much lower.

Table #1 indicates the percentage of potentially toxic feeds submitted from June 1981 to present.

Table 1

% Of Samples Submitted Containing Greater Than 1% Nitrate
June 1981 - May 1988

		Hay Samples %	Fresh Plant Samples %
Cereal Hay (greenfeed)			
	Oats	11.4	16.0
	Barley	5.6	10.1
	Wheat	1.8	4.8
Hay	Alfalfa	.4	1.6
	Brome	.2	0

(Cont'd)

Reporting methods

Various labs across the province use different methods to report nitrate content in feeds. Table 2 should help with interpreting nitrate test results once the method of analysis is known.

Table 2

Method Of Analysis - Report Interpretation

	% NO_3	% NO_3-N	% KNO_3	
Less than	.5	.12	.81	Generally "safe" with no adverse effect on performance.
	.5-1.0	.12-.23	.81-1.63	Caution: may reduce growth or milk production
Greater than	1.0	.23	1.63	High nitrate feed. Expect reduced growth and milk production, abortions, death loss.

Feeding

According to Yaremcio, a high nitrate content in fresh forages does not produce as severe effects as hay at the same nitrate content.

"Once forage is consumed nitrates are released at a slower rate from fresh plant material than from hay or silage," he says. "The rate of dry matter consumption is also faster with dry or wilted feeds than with fresh plant material.

"An accidental over-supply of nitrate can have serious consequences," he says. "Dead animals have been found after the first feeding."

He advises producers to keep high nitrate feeds separate from other feed sources, and that high nitrate feeds can be diluted with other nitrate-free feeds.

"Nitrate can be broken down by the ensiling process, however, good-

(Cont'd)

quality silage will often contain the same nitrate levels as the fresh feed," he says. " Nitrate levels will only drop if the ensiling procedure is not up to par. If this occurs, the silage will be nutritionally inferior."

Symptoms

Yaremcio says the first symptoms of nitrate poisoning will appear when 20 per cent of the haemoglobin has been altered by nitrite. Mucous membranes will change color from the normal pink to a more blue coloration.

As the poisoning becomes more severe, (approximately 50 per cent decrease of oxygen carrying capacity) these signs of distress may occur: heavy breathing, muscle trembling, unco-ordinated walk, salivation or slobbering from the mouth or inability to stand.

"When the condition is this severe, it is essential to obtain veterinarian assistance immediately," says Yaremcio, "and remove the suspected feed.

"The onset of these conditions can be very rapid--so rapid that in many cases death loss occurs before the stockman notices other symptoms."

He adds, high levels of nitrates have the greatest effect on pregnant stock.

If a dead animal is found, and the carcass is fresh, the blood will be a dark red to chocolate brown color. For proper diagnosis, blood color must be checked within two hours of death.

Chronic or sublethal doses of nitrate can affect the productivity of livestock. The main areas of concern are: lower than normal milk production, growth rate, conception problems and repeat breeders. Cows that were tested as pregnant may recycle one to three months later. This may be due to interference with hormonel levels that occur when high nitrate feeds are fed before 100 days of pregnancy.

"Some new research information indicates that reproductive disturbances may occur during the first 100 days of pregnancy with nitrate levels half that which is currently regarded as safe," says Yaremcio.

(Cont'd)

Plants associated with nitrate poisoning

"Given the right conditions, there is a potential for almost all feeds to contain some nitrate," says Yaremcio.

The plants more commonly associated with nitrate poisoning are: forages, cereal hays or greenfeed (especially oats), sudan grass, red root pigweed, corn plants, lambs quarters and elderberry.

"Know what plants are present in your pasture or grazing land," he says. "Walk the area before putting the cattle out when conditions are right for the accumulation of nitrates."

Sampling

"There is only one way to be confident about the levels of nitrate in your feed and that is to have it tested," says the lab nutritionist.

Fresh plant samples to be tested should be clipped just above ground. A bread bag half-full will be sufficient to obtain a good test result. Take plants from 15 to 20 locations in the field.

Sampling of hay or greenfeed bales should be done with a proper probe. Sampling 20 bales from various parts of the stack will provide a good overall view of the feed quality.

Alberta Agriculture district offices have boxes, bags and hay probes available for farmers' use. Samples can be sent in from district offices by courier to ensure quick delivery to the lab. Nitrate test results are generally available three days after receipt of the sample at the lab.

"Send the samples in directly; do not let them wilt or lay in the sun, says Yaremcio. "Test results are only as accurate as the sample received."

Private labs are able to provide a "nitrate only" package whereas the Agricultural Soils and Animal Nutrition Lab includes nitrate as part of the regular forage testing package. The cost for a nitrate only test is usually cheaper at a private lab. Yaremcio advises livestock producers to decide what information is required and choose the lab accordingly.

Contact: Barry Yaremcio
436-9150

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

July 25, 1988
For immediate release

Locoweed poisoning in livestock

Farmers and ranchers are reminded to watch for abnormal behavior in their livestock which could indicate the first signs of locoweed poisoning.

"Because of the drought being experienced in southern Alberta there is concern that livestock may be forced to consume these poisonous plants," says Dr. Gordon Chalmers, a veterinarian with the department's regional veterinary laboratory in Lethbridge.

The veterinarian says although locoweeds are unpalatable to most classes of livestock, they will be eaten when the range is in poor condition because of drought or overgrazing, when forage is scarce or salt is lacking.

The word "loco" is Spanish for mad, crazy or insane and describes not only the plants but also the behavior of livestock that are affected by these plants.

The plants are distributed widely in western North America and in Alberta, are found on native ranges east of the Rocky Mountains in the Brown and Dark Brown soil zones in the southern half of the province.

Horses, sheep, cattle goats and elk are affected naturally by locoweed poisoning, and even honey bees working the flowers of spotted locoweed in other areas of North America have been poisoned. Poisonings have occurred in horses and sheep in southern Alberta in past years.

"One of the problems with locoweed is that livestock crave or become addicted to these plants," says Chalmers. "Locoweed-poisoned animals will consciously seek out these plants, often consuming them to the exclusion of other forage."

Horses are at least eight to 10 times more sensitive than sheep and cattle to the effects of locoweed and may die after eating only 30 per cent of their body weight during a six-week period.

"In horses, the first signs are a change in mental attitude and an irregular gait," says Chalmers. "They become listless, drag their feet and lose muscle control."

(Cont'd)

If undisturbed, affected horses are dull and sleepy but if handled, they can develop unusual excitement, rearing, falling and acting "crazy". Such horses are very unpredictable and are therefore dangerous to ride. Affected horses become unco-ordinated, may be unable to eat or drink, lose weight and develop a rough hair coat. Eventually they may become paralyzed. Death usually results from starvation.

Chalmers stresses that horses poisoned by locoweeds seldom recover sufficiently to be usable and are always potentially dangerous to ride or handle.

Affected sheep have a peculiar, erratic, pacing gait, with nervousness and stiffness, inco-ordination and head held high. Abortion and developmental defects can occur if animals ingest these plants during pregnancy.

Cattle poisoned by locoweeds have signs similar to those of horses. Cattle and sheep may recover if removed from the source of the locoweeds.

Farmers and ranchers who find abnormal attitudes and behavior in horses, sheep and cattle, particularly animals that are known to have access to locoweeds, should contact their veterinary practitioner for advice.

"Other diseases can produce signs similar to those of locoweed poisoning and the assistance of a practising veterinarian is needed to differentiate these conditions," says Chalmers.

Plants suspected of being toxic may be identified through the offices of agricultural fieldmen, district agriculturists or practising veterinarians.

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Contact: Dr. Gordon Chalmers
381-5190

July 25, 1988
For immediate release

Top 4-H'er meets Alberta Premier

The 1988 Alberta 4-H Premier's Award recipient, Lisa Properzi, recently met Premier Don Getty.

The Barrhead area youth was chosen to receive the Premier's Award at the provincial 4-H Selections program in May. The title is the highest honor a 4-H member can receive in Alberta. Twenty-four Alberta 4-H senior members have been honored as the Premier's Award winner since the award was initiated in 1964.

On the day of her meeting with the Premier, Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga introduced Properzi and her family to the Legislative Assembly.

Properzi, an eight-year member of the Freedom-Naples 4-H Multi Club, has acted in the executive positions of club reporter, secretary and vice-president. She is an experienced public speaker and has been involved at club through provincial levels in the 4-H organization.

She was active on her grad committee and the student council at RF Staples High School in Westlock, and plans to attend the University of Alberta this fall to study general arts.

Properzi will represent Alberta 4-H members at various provincial and regional functions during her one-year term of office.

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Contact: Mahlon Weir
427-2541

For immediate release

1988 Alberta ram test station has best year ever

More than 300 buyers and spectators were on hand July 2 at Olds College for the 14th Annual Alberta Ram Test Station barbeque and sale.

The event, which drew buyers from Canada and the U.S, saw some of the best performance tested ram lambs and yearlings in the nation offered for sale, says Cathy Gallivan, Alberta Agriculture sheep specialist.

With the reserve bids set at $250, all of the 74 rams on offer found buyers as record gross receipts of $44,256.00 were obtained. A record average price of $598 was achieved.

The top indexing ram in the sale, which was from the Suffolk flock of Mr. Walt Strand of Lethbridge, Alberta, had an average daily gain of 0.647 kilograms per day (1.42 lb), and sold for $1,150 to Blaine Kennedy of Ontario. The high selling ram in the sale, from the Suffolk flock of Tom Seaborn of Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, was purchased for $1,650 by Olds College. Purchases were made by buyers from Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and Montana, with several outstanding rams going to out-of-province flocks.

Gallivan reports new test station records were set for the Polypay (Lawson- 0.504 kg/day) and Rambouillet (Olds College - 0.525 kg/day) breeds. Romanovs were tested for the first time in the 1988 season.

A record of 221 rams from 37 contributors were entered on test this year.

"Only rams above the station average for A.D.G. for their breed are considered for sale each year," says Gallivan. "A culling committee further rejects rams with incorrect teeth, legs, testicles, etc. from this group, so that this year only one-third of the animals entered on test made their way through the screening process to the sale."

The Alberta Sheep Breeders Trophy for the highest group average A.D.G. on four or more rams went to Tom Seaborn of Rocky Mountain House, Alberta. Seaborn's four Suffolk ram lambs averaged 0.581 kilograms per day. The Canadian Cooperative Wool Growers Trophy for the yearling with the highest overall index on the Wool Breeds test went to Rambouillet breeders,

(Cont'd)

M. Gail and David K. Stewart of Delburne, Alberta. Five Rambouillets were entered on the wool test for next year.

The following is a summary of the 1988 Ram Test Station results:

BREED	NUMBER TESTED	A.D.G. KG/DAY	NUMBER SOLD	AVERAGE PRICE	HIGH PRICE
SUFFOLK	145	.518	48	612	1650
HAMPSHIRE	9	.511	3	550	600
DORSET	21	.400	10	548	800
RAMBOUILLET	24	.424	--	---	---
POLYPAY	17	.434	7	500	750
ROMANOV	5	.381	1	625	625
YEARLINGS	6	----	5	725	1100

The following is a summary of test station results since the first test season in 1975:

BREEDERS ON PROGRAM		RAMS ENTERED ON TEST	A.D.G. (SUFFOLK RAM LAMBS)	HEAD SOLD	AVERAGE PRICE (ALL RAMS)	TOP PRICE
1975	12	85	.32 Kg.	45	$223	$ 525
1976	7	70	.36 Kg.	43	$231	$ 450
1977	14	165	.36 Kg.	53	$244	$ 500
1978	16	153	.42 Kg.	57	$275	$1050
1979	17	123	.49 Kg.	52	$331	$ 675
1980	17	101	.48 Kg.	44	$323	$ 520
1981	23	102	.48 Kg.	40	$375	$ 775
1982	28	115	.47 Kg.	49	$387	$1100
1983	38	173	.514 Kg.	61	$332	$ 750
1984	37	*228	.550 Kg.	72	$384	$1500
1985	38	*202	.534 Kg.	61	$421	$1350
1986	28	**238	.516 Kg.	51	$416	$ 950
1987	24	**190	.508 Kg.	64	$558	$2800
1988	37	*226	.518 Kg.	74	$598	$1650

*Includes entries on Wool Breeds Test.
**Includes entries on Wool Breeds Test and Hays Pasture Test.

(Cont'd)

1988 Alberta ram test station has best year ever

High selling ram at the 1988 Alberta Ram Test Station, Crooked Post 15X, bred by Tom Seaborn, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta and bought by Olds College, Olds, Alberta for $1,650. From left: Barry Wilson, Olds College; Tom Seaborn; and Reg Radke, Olds College.

Les Toth (far right) presents the Canadian Cooperatve Wool Growers trophy for the highest overall index on the Wool Breeds Test to Rambouillet breeders David and Gail Stewart of Delburne, Alberta. Their ram, Whiffletree IW, was purchased by Agriculture Canada for an A.I. stud in Quebec for $750.

(Cont'd)

Walt Strand of Lethbridge, Alberta, holding Strand 35X, the fastest gaining (0.647 kg/day) ram in 1988 Test Station Sale. The ram was purchased by Blaine Kennedy of Ontario for $1,150.

For more information on the 1988 Alberta Ram Test Station, contact station manager, Cathy Gallivan, sheep specialist, Alberta Agriculture, Bag Service #1, Airdrie, Alberta T4B 2C1, phone 948-8517.

Contact: Cathy Gallivan
948-8517

For immediate release

Peas for profit feature of summer tour

Alberta farmers interested in pea production and wanting to save a few dollars should register for a tour of field pea variety plots in Alberta Agriculture's northwest region.

The Peas for Profit - 1988 Summer Tour in the Westlock-Barrhead area will focus on new pea varieties.

"The day-long tour, August 4, will feature a look at 28 pea varieties being grown in a trial project for grain production and four varieties being tested for silage production," says Rod Carlyon, district agriculturist at Westlock.

"There will also be a look at fertility and innoculation trials and stops at various fields of peas in the area," he says.

Approximately 250,000 acres of field peas are grown in Alberta, mainly in the Parkland area on Black soils where moisture is not limited.

According to Bob Park, with Alberta Agriculture's field crops branch in Lacombe, above average yields for the crop are expected this year.

"Although field peas had a slow start because of dry conditions, improved seeding techniques and good moisture levels should result in better yields than last year," says Park. "Yields of 2,800 to 3,000 pounds per acre are expected."

The tour cost is $20 for those who register before July 29 and $25 after that date. This includes transportation, lunch, a steak barbecue and refreshments. The tour will begin at 9:30 a.m. at the Hazel Bluff Hall, west of Westlock.

The day is being co-ordinated by the Pulse Growers' Association of Alberta-Northern Branch. For information contact Alberta Agriculture district offices in Westlock at 349-4465, Barrhead at 674-8213, Morinville at 939-4351 or Stony Plain at 963-6101.

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Contact: Rod Carlyon
349-4465

For immediate release

Crops field day at Alberta Environmental Centre

The plant sciences wing of the Alberta Environmental Centre, Vegreville will hold its sixth annual Crops Field Day on August 4 at at 1:30 p.m.

Visitors will be taken on a tour of research plots in weed science, plant pathology and entomology. The tour will include the cereal and special crops regional variety trials. Several varieties of fababeans, field peas, lentils and other special crops as well as many varieties of cereal crops will also be shown.

Dr. Prem Kharbanda with the centre says, participants will have an opportunity to see field experiments on weed control with newly registered and experimental herbicides and herbicide mixtures, tolerance of new cereal varieties to registered herbicides, tolerance of rotational crops to herbicide carryover, and competition and crop losses due to weeds and biological control of round-leaved mallow. Also included in the tour is an excellent collection of 80 weed species established in a weed garden.

Research plots on plant diseases such as snow mold, and crown and root rot of alfalfa, blackleg and seedling blight of canola, sclerotinia stem rot of peas and lentils, and root rot and foliar diseases of cereals will be visited.

The tours will take participants to field experiments on insect problems in crops, and the tolerance of various barley varieties to thrips damage will be shown.

A unique implement, recently developed at the Environmental Centre, to easily measure soil compaction will be on display.

Demonstration trials of native grasses selected for their ability to grow in extreme environments and their salt tolerance will be another attraction.

(Cont'd)

The tours will be of special interest to farmers but everyone is welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served during the course of the tour.

The Alberta Environmental Centre was opened in 1980 to do research for Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Environment and other provincial government departments and agencies. The centre is located in Vegreville, 100 kilometres east of Edmonton on Highway 16.

Contact: Dr. Prem Kharbanda
632-6761

For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

FIELD DAY ON HARVESTING TECHNIQUES PLANNED

Pulse growers looking for new ideas in harvesting techniques should plan to attend an afternoon field day near Camrose in mid-August. Staged at the Ken Kusk farm near Kelsey, the program gets underway at 12:30 p.m.. It will include field demonstrations on swathing equipment, desiccation plots, aeration and drying and an equipment display. The registration fee of $10 includes an evening barbecue. To reach the Kusk farm head east from Camrose on Highway 13 , then south on Secondary Road 956 to the signs. Pre-registration is requested by August 10. For more information contact Alberta Agriculture district agriculturists, David Samm in Camrose at 679-1210 or Neil Miller in Lacombe at 782-3301 or 342-2813. The field day is sponsored by the Central Alberta Pulse Growers and Alberta Agriculture.

ALBERTA CORN TOUR SET FOR SEPT. 7

Corn production in southern Alberta will be featured during an afternoon tour in the Rolling Hills area in early September. Sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, the September 7 tour will make several stops to look at grain and silage corn fields, farm operations that feed corn silage to calves and bulls, and innovative equipment. A barbecue at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center in Brooks will follow. For more information contact Alberta Agriculture district offices in Brooks, Bow Island, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge.

OLDS COLLEGE OFFERS COURSES IN DAIRY FARM TRAINING

Olds College will be offering courses this fall and winter for anyone interested in pursuing a career as a dairy farm worker or herdsman. The pre-employment certificate programs are geared for both the experienced and non-experienced farm workers. The "Dairy Farm Worker" is a

(Cont'd)

12-week course running from September 26 to December 16. Designed for students with limited or no dairy experience, the course will train students to handle general duties on the dairy farm which include handling and routine maintenance of equipment and machinery, milking, cow handling, feeding cows and manure removal. The "Dairy Herdsman Assistant" course, running 15 weeks from January 3 to April 21, 1989, is designed for students with some dairy background who wish to expand their knowledge. Students will specialize in milking, cow health, calf care, record keeping and artificial insemination. Applicants who must be at least 18 years of age, should register as soon as possible and no later than two weeks before the class begins. For more information contact Olds College, department of extension services at 556-8344 in Olds.

COMPLETE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EARLY AT LAMBS IN LACOMBE

More than 30 craft exhibitors will have unique gift ideas on display in mid-September at the third annual Lambs in Lacombe Sheep and Wool Fair. Sponsored by the Blindman Valley Sheep Producers Association the September 17 fair provides something for every member of family from sheep displays, ewe lamb sale and shawl auction to sheep dog demonstrations and crafts sale. Working with the support of Alberta Agriculture, the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, and Custom Woolen Mills the event will feature a look at some of the top sheep breeds in Alberta. For more information contact Jennifer Oak in Winfield at 682-2490.

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AGRI-NEWS

August 1, 1988

For immediate release

CANADIANA
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AGRICULTURE
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For immediate release

Summary of 1987-88 cow-calf survey released

Results of a cow-calf survey conducted in the fall of 1987 have recently been released by Alberta Agriculture's beef cattle and sheep branch.

Dr. Laura Rutter, a reproductive physiologist with the department, says the survey was conducted in an attempt to continue monitoring provincial and regional averages regarding some herd fertility parameters.

The cow-calf survey forms were mailed to district agriculturists and practising veterinarians.

The survey examined herd location, number of females palpated for pregnancy, number of females pregnant, average herd body condition score, length of breeding season, disposition of open and late-calving cows, as well as other comments.

"The number of herds represented was over 118 with a total of 15,233 females preg-tested in the fall of 1987," she says. "The number of females represented in this survey is approximately 2.5 times the number in the previous year's survey and accounts for about 1.5 per cent of Alberta's breeding stock."

Overall percentage of cows pregnant in the fall of 1987 (91.9 ± .7%) was similar to the percentage in 1986 (92.2 ± 2.6%).

Average body condition score in 1987 (3.3 ± .1) was higher than in 1986 (2.9 ± .1), probably reflecting the abundance of good-quality pasture last summer. The average length of the breeding season in 1987 (118 ± 11 days) was 15 days shorter than in 1986 (133 ± 7 days). However, the range in the length of the breeding season was similar in the two years studied (44 to 365 days in 1987 versus 42 to 286 days in 1986).

Some highlights of the survey included:

-An average of less than 50 per cent of the cows preg-checked were estimated to be early calvers. Optimal calving profiles suggest that 75 per cent or more of the cows should calve in the first three weeks of the calving season.

(Cont'd)

-An average of more than 15 per cent of the cows preg-checked were estimated to be late calvers. Optimal calving profiles suggest that five per cent or less of the cows should calve later than nine weeks after the start of the calving season.

-About 40 per cent of the cow-calf producers keep late-calvers in the breeding herd. The most commonly listed reason for open cows in 1987 was that they calved late in the spring.

-Other reasons for open cows listed were questionable bull fertility and/or disease.

"Sound reproductive management is an integral part of any progressive cow/calf operation," says Dr. Rutter. "Reproductive efficiency, however, is only one part of an operation and other equally important components of the whole include health care, nutrition, marketing and financial management strategies."

"There are numerous experts and specialists that producers can consult regarding individual farm needs, strengths and weaknesses," she says. "I would advocate farmers use a team approach, calling on various experts depending on the type of program who could best fit that particular need."

For further information regarding this survey, or other matters related to reproduction in domestic animals, contact Dr. L. M. Rutter, Reproductive Physiologist, Beef Cattle and Sheep Branch, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6, 427-5304.

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Contact: Dr. Laura Rutter
427-5304

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following table provides a breakdown by region of the number of herds checked in the survey, pregnancy rate, body condition, length of breeding season and other related information.

Table 1. Regional Means and Ranges in Various Herd Fertility Parameters - 1987/88 Cow Calf Survey Summary

Region	No. Vets	No. Herds	No. Cow Checked	Pregnancy Rate (%)	Body Condition Score	Length of Breeding Season (Days)	Estimated Calving Profile: Calving in the 1st 3 Wk (%)	Estimated Calving Profile: Calving After 9 Wks (%)	Herds Keeping Late Calvers (%)
Southern									
TOTAL	2	24+	6759	92.1±1.8	4.2 ±.1	72.6 ± 2.9	44.3 ± 3.9	10.0 ± 1.9	32.0
(RANGE)			(19-3899)	(57.1-100.0)	(4.0 - 5.0)	(61 - 97)	(10 - 90)	(0 - 30)	
South Central									
TOTAL	2	11	1048	93.5±1.6	2.8 ± .1	96.9±11.2	63.1±4.8	11.3 ± 1.5	44.4
(RANGE)			(23-196)	(79.5-100.0)	(2.5 - 3.5)	(55 - 173)	(38 - 90)	(5 - 21)	
North Central									
TOTAL	2	23	2259	89.2±2.4	3.1±.17	90.6±8.5	80.5±4.4	11.7 ± 3.2	33.3
(RANGE)			(16-226)	(43.8-100.0)	(1.5-4.5)	(44 - 151)	(23 -100)	(0 - 54)	
Northeast									
TOTAL	1	1	152	92.8	3.0	-	60.0	10.0	-
Northwest									
TOTAL	1	8	981	87.3±3.7	2.8 ± .2	106.3±10.5	16.0±2.3	34.3 ± 7.2	100.0
(RANGE)			(41-255)	(70.8-96.3)	(2.0 - 3.5)	(68 - 155)	(10 - 25)	(10 - 63)	
Peace River									
TOTAL	3	52	4040	93.3±.7	3.2± .1	157.3±24.4	38.3± 3.0	16.8 ± 2.1	36.5
(RANGE)			(20-195)	(75.0-100.0)	(2.0-5.0)	(45-365)	(10 - 94)	(0 - 80)	
OVERALL	110	118	15233	91.9±.7	3.3± .1	118±11	48.4±2.5	15.1 ± 1.4	39.1

For immediate release

Custom haying rates haven't changed

The cost of making hay using custom contractors hasn't changed much from last year according to new figures compiled by Alberta Agriculture.

"Although rates vary from area to area, reflecting local conditions, a survey conducted by the department's statistics branch, shows no significant changes over the past few years," says Garth Nickorick with the farm business management branch in Olds.

Past survey results indicate mowing and conditioning charges are in the $7 to $10 per acre range. Square baling costs range from 30 to 34 cents per bale. For stacking and hauling (less than one mile) add another 25 to 30 cents per bale.

For large round bales, baling charges range from $4.50 to $10 per bale with the most commonly quoted rate in all regions being $5 to $7 per bale. For stacking and hauling within a mile of the field add $1 to $2 per bale to the cost.

It should be noted that any additional service such as raking, covering or long distance hauling will add to the cost. For hauling less than 100 miles, $3 per loaded mile is a common rate. For longer hauls up to 250 miles, the rate is $2.50 to $2.75 per loaded mile.

For a copy of the survey results for your area or county, contact Garth Nickorick, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0, or phone 556-4247.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

Crops of Alberta open house set for August 4 - 5

The use of certain crops to protect and improve soil quality will be the focus of the annual Crops of Alberta open house scheduled later this week in Edmonton.

The fourth annual showcase, located at the Alberta Agriculture headquarters at 7000-113 Street, will feature a soil conservation theme.

Project co-ordinator Donna Pickle says, "We want to emphasize the seriousness of wind and water erosion in the province and point out practices that can help to prevent further loss of valuable topsoil.

The use of annual legumes such as lentils, fababeans, annual alfalfa and Austrian winter peas for plowdowns is demonstrated, along with the seeding of winter crops into various stubble heights.

"These are some of the methods that will be used to promote soil conservation practices that help control soil erosion problems in the province," says Pickle.

The display, planted on about one acre of ground just south of the agriculture building, features some 70 types of field crops as well as several horticulture crops.

Pickle says the plots give people a chance to see what different crops look like and learn what they are used for.

Display plots will feature 260 cereal, forage, oilseed special and horticultural crops produced in Alberta.

It is available all summer for visitors to drop by and take the self-guided tour. The open house allows for more personal contact with guests.

During the open house, guided tours will be offered at 10 a.m., 12 p.m. and 3 p.m. each day. The plots can also be viewed between tours with staff available to answer any questions.

(Cont'd)

Among some of the more unusual crops shown this year, will be lentils, safflower, sugar beets, canary seed, soybean, field peas, field beans, fababeans, jerusalem artichoke and crambe.

No advance booking is required to participate in the open house.

For more information on the tours phone 427-7098.

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Contact: Donna Pickle
427-7098

For immediate release

Agriculture conference returns to Kananaskis

Alberta farmers are urged to mark their calendars for Alberta Agriculture's Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit 12th annual conference to be held at The Lodge at Kananaskis from March 5 to 8, 1989.

"The Lodge at Kananaskis proved to be an ideal location," says co-ordinator Gerd Andres. "Ninety per cent of last year's participants gave it an excellent rating and it was the overwhelming site choice for the 1989 conference."

Previous to 1988, the conference was held for eight years in Banff and for two years in Lake Louise.

Organized by the farm business management branch in Olds, the conference offers something for all farmers.

Andres says the conference presents new management tools and ideas, and practical information that applies to both the personal and business aspects of farm families.

"The content of the conference was highly rated for its usefulness in attaining immediate and long-term goals of participants," he says.

Francis and Bonnie Gardner from Nanton, Alberta who have attended the conference for the past four years, say, "We come home with a gem of a technique that will help in making future decisions."

They add that the conference has aided their ability to prepare themselves from both a business and personal perspective.

The 1989 conference program will feature more Canadian speakers.

The human relations and communications area will include such topics as enriching relationships, empowering strategies in helping farm families and rural communities take control, planning for retirement and practical issues in labor relations.

(Cont'd)

The conference will offer sessions on back care complete with exercises for strength and flexibility.

The agricultural sessions will include livestock and crop production, sustainable agriculture, farmer machinery innovations, capital investments, along with economic, finance, business and farm mangement topics.

As well the program will include farm policy and short and long-term forecasts of global issues which will affect agriculture.

The conference accommodates 450 participants. Eighty per cent of participants who attended the conference in March 1988 were full-time farmers. Seventy-three per cent of participants attended the conference as couples.

Further details on topics and speakers will be announced at later dates. Registration will be on a first come first served basis. Watch for registration forms at Alberta Agriculture district offices by the end of October.

For more information call Gerd Andres or Maggie Lamb at 403-556-4240 or write to MATFP'89, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta TOM 1P0.

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Contact: Gerd Andres or Maggie Lamb
556-4240

For immediate release

Beckingham named DA in Vegreville

Jeff Beckingham, a University of Manitoba graduate, has been named district agriculturist in Vegreville. Beckingham, who received his bachelor of science degree specializing in animal science in 1982, will work as co-district agriculturist with Barry Bishop.

Beckingham was raised on a small mixed farm in Manitoba.

Following university, Beckingham worked as an assistant agricultural representative in Manitoba for two summers, and later as a grassland technician for the Eastern Grassland Society in Beausejour, Manitoba for several years.

His recent appointment was announced by Ralph Berkan, director of Alberta Agriculture's northeast regional office.

Prior to his present appointment, Beckingham trained as a DA in St. Paul.

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Contact: Jeff Beckingham
632-5400

August 1, 1988 10

For immediate release

District agriculturist named at Two Hills

A University of Alberta graduate, born and raised in the Edmonton area, has been named district agriculturist at Two Hills. Ken King will be working in co-operation with district agriculturist Shane Dobson.

King graduated from the University of Alberta in 1983 with a bachelor of science degree specializing in agronomy.

Previously, King worked as an agronomist/assistant manager with Green Leaf Farm Supply in Trochu, Alberta, where he provided information and advice to producers on crop and soil management. He has extensive experience in crop varieties, fertilizers, herbicides and cropping practices.

The appointment was announced by Ralph Berkan, director of Alberta Agriculture's northeast region.

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Contact: Ken King
657-3311

For immediate release

Tax reform measures being implemented
(First of a three-part series)

By MERLE GOOD

In mid June, Federal Finance Minister Michael Wilson tabled a Ways and Means motion to implement Phase I of Tax Reform. These reforms were initially presented in the White Paper of June 1987 and subsequently in December 1987 in a Notice of Ways and Means motion. There have been substantial modifications to the initial White Paper proposals, especially in the area of the taxation treatment of farm losses.

The following is a summary of some of the main features of the Ways and Means motion of specific interest to the farming industry.

Cash-Basis Tax Filing - Cash-basis accounting will be maintained rather than implementing the modified accrual accounting proposal.

Flexible Inventory Adjustment - A flexible inventory adjustment similar to the optional value of livestock provision (or Livestock Inventory Provision) was introduced. All inventories including commodities and supplies will now be eligible for this adjustment.

Mandatory Inventory Adjustment - A mandatory inventory adjustment (MIA) was introduced, which pertains to all purchased inventory in loss years. In such cases, an inventory adjustment will be required to either reduce or eliminate the loss to the extent that a farmer still has purchased inventory on hand. This proposal therefore suggests that losses can only be deducted to the extent they exceed the cost or value of purchased inventory on hand at the end of the year. Note purchased inventory on hand, irrespective of when it was purchased, is valued for this purpose. Two phase-in options are being provided over a seven-year period to cushion the impact of this proposal.

Section 31 Restricted Farm Losses - The Section 31 provision restricting losses for part-time farmers is amended to increase the loss limitations from the present $2,500 plus one-half of the next $5,000 to $2,500 plus one-half of the next $12,500 of losses. This results in a maximum loss level of $8,750 rather than the previous $5,000.

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Gross Revenue and Profit Tests - The gross revenue and profit test proposals, which would have determined if a person is a full- or part-time farmer have been deferred for further consultations. The existing "reasonable expectation of profit" and chief source of income tests will remain in effect until Finance completes its consultations.

Race Horses and Show Animals - Finance has withdrawn their previous proposal to limit the deduction of the purchase of race horses and show animals by a 20 per cent declining balance write-off. Instead, a special category of livestock defined as "specified animals" has been introduced. These animals will consist of all horses and whereby so elected, bovine livestock registered under the Livestock Pedigree Act. Under the new farm loss rules, in the year of the purchase, the inventory add-back will be 70 per cent of the original cost of the animal. In subsequent years, the add back will be 70 per cent of the previous year's balance. Special rules apply regarding the value of inventory to be added back for purchases of specified animals made in 1988 and prior years.

Five-year Block Average - The five-year Block Average provision is being phased out, as 1991 is the last year that can be included in a block period. In other words, you can block average for a five-year period commencing in 1987 or earlier.

Capital Gains Exemption - The capital gains exemption has been expanded to allow family farm partnerships and personal trusts that own qualifying farm property access to the $500,000 capital gains exemption provisions. Note there are specific qualifying rules for property acquired before and after June 17, 1987. Corporations still are not eligible for the exemption.

Corporate Shares and Partnership Interest - The sale of corporate shares and partnership interests are eligible for the $500,000 lifetime capital gains exemption.

Eligible Capital Property - For the 1988 taxation year, eligible capital property (quota) will qualify for the exemption. The taxable portion consists of the recaptured depreciation claimed and the taxable capital gains portion which is eligible for the $500,000 exemption.

(Cont'd)

Home Office and Entertainment Deductions - The limitation on food, beverages and entertainment expenses is limited to 80 per cent.

Automobile Operating Expenses - Automobile operating expenses are limited to the extent of the percentage of business mileage to total mileage. Fixed costs are further prorated by the portion of business use to total kilometres that is less than 24,000 kilometres.

Alternate Minimum Tax - Any capital gain resulting from a foreclosure will be excluded from alternate minimum tax.

Land Improvements - A reduced deduction has been proposed on land improvement costs such as clearing land, levelling land and installing a drainage system. The amendments will allow a taxpayer to claim less than the full cost in the year in which the expenditure is made, and to carry forward the undeducted portion for deduction in a subsequent year.

It is important to understand that these rules are again proposed changes to the Income Tax Act and are not law. The effective date for the changes to Section 31 and the Farm Loss rules will be 1989, while all other changes will be effective for the 1988 taxation year.

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Contact: Merle Good
556-4237

(Editor's Note: Merle Good is a farm income tax management specialist with Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch in Olds. To further explain tax reform measures in greater depth, Good has also prepared Tax reform update - Inventory adjustments and farm loss - Part II; and Tax reform update - Taxation issues affecting agriculture - Part III.)

For immmediate release

Tax reform update - Inventory adjustments and farm losses
(Second of a three-part series)

By MERLE GOOD

The Income Tax Act provides for cash-basis accounting for farmers. As a result of the Ways and Means Motion of June 13, 1988, this method of tax accounting will continue to be available to farmers. However, two new and important provisions have been added that greatly affect these cash basis calculations. These provisions are: (1) the extension of the Flexible Livestock Inventory Provision to include all agricultural inventory and (2) a Mandatory Inventory Adjustment (MIA) in loss years. These amendments once passed will apply for the 1989 taxation year.

Flexible Livestock Inventory Provision Extended to Other Agricultural Commodities

Currently, farmers can elect to add to income an amount no greater than the fair market value of their livestock on hand. This provision is called the Optional Value of Livestock or may be more commonly called the Livestock Inventory Provision.

Amendments contained in the Ways and Means Motion, introduced on June 13, 1988 will extend the flexible livestock inventory provision to all farm inventory. The maximum amount that can be added to income will be the fair market value of inventory on hand at the end of the taxation year. The primary use of this amended provision is to allow farmers the opportunity to add the value of inventory to income in years when a loss occurs or income is not sufficient in order to utilize exemptions available. Any amount added in one year is deducted in the subsequent year.

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Mandatory Inventory Adjustment in Loss Years

A new requirement for a mandatory inventory adjustment in loss years has been presented in the Ways and Means motion. This inventory adjustment is in respect of purchased inventory on hand at the end of the taxation year. The adjustment is proposed to operate in a manner similar to the existing flexible livestock inventory election except that it is: a) mandatory; b) will apply only to purchased inventory; and c) will apply only in loss years.

The adjustment will require an addition to income in a loss year of an amount equal to the loss or the value of purchased inventory on hand at the end of the year, whichever is less. As with the flexible livestock inventory election, any amount required to be included in income in a year is deducted in the following year.

The following example will help illustrate this concept.

		1989
Cash Income (Loss) before inventory purchases		($5,000)
Purchased Inventory during year		($10,000)
Cash Income (Loss)		($15,000)
Add: Lessor of:		
Amount of Loss	$15,000	
or		+$15,000
Purchased Inventory value on hand	$20,000	
Adjusted Cash Income (Loss)		0

For the purposes of the new inventory adjustment, purchased farm inventory will generally be valued at the lower of its original purchase price and its fair market value. There is an exception however, and this is in respect of the "specified animal" proposal of the June 13, 1988 Ways and Means motion.

For the purpose of this new proposal, all horses are to be regarded as "specified animals". A bovine animal registered under the Livestock Pedigree Act may be treated as a "specified animal" at the option of the taxpayer. A "specified animal" will be valued at 70 per cent of its original purchase price under diminishing balance unless the taxpayer chooses to value the animal at a greater amount (not exceeding its original cost).

(Cont'd)

Transitional relief has been provided to reduce the impact of including the entire value of inventory on hand which was purchased in taxation years before 1989. Taxpayers are provided the option to choose between two alternative methods of calculations in each of the first six taxation years.

By the seventh year, the mandatory inventory adjustments will be fully phased in under either method.

The two phase-in measures are: a) the "fixed dollar" and b) "elective method". The "fixed dollar" method will apply unless the taxpayer elects otherwise.

As the name "fixed dollar" would imply, the amount of inventory adjustment is reduced by a fixed amount each year. The fixed amount will be $15,000 for 1989 and declining by $2,500 each subsequent year ('90 - $12,500,'91 - $10,000, '92 - $7,500, '93 - $5,000 and '94 - $2,500).

Under the elective method, the amount of relief provided is based on the value of the purchased inventory on hand purchased up to and including 1988. In the first year 1/7 of the value of this purchased inventory will be taken into account in calculating the mandatory inventory adjustment. In year two, 2/7 of the value of purchased inventory will be taken into account and so forth up to the seventh year, whereby the full amount of purchased inventory from previous years, would be deducted if required.

In any case, these adjustments are required only when cash-basis losses occur and are not required in any year a taxpayer has a positive net farm income.

For the purposes of both transitional rules, a special valuation rule will apply to "specified animals" which were purchased in taxation years commencing before 1989. For taxpayers having a calendar year-end, specified animals owned by them on January 1, 1989 will be valued in 1989 and subsequent taxation years as though they had been purchased in 1989 for:

a) 100% of original cost if purchased in 1988;
b) 50% of original cost if purchased in 1986 or 1987; and
c) 25% of original cost if purchased before 1986.

(Cont'd)

The following examples illustrate the way the two transitional methods will work:

Fixed-Dollar Method: In 1989 a farmer using cash-basis tax filing has a cash loss of $35,000. Purchased livestock and supplies valued at $40,000 are on hand at the end of the year which were purchased in 1989 and earlier years. There are no specified animals and this is the first year of the new system.

The farmer does not choose to use the elective method and as a result the fixed-dollar method applies.

		1989
Cash Income (Loss) before Inventory purchases		($25,000)
Purchased inventory during year		($10,000)
Cash Income (Loss)		($35,000)
Add: 1989 MIA being the lesser of		
(A) Amount of Loss	$35,000	
or		
(B) Purchased Inventory on hand regardless of year of purchase	$40,000	+$20,000
Less: transitional relief of $15,000 ($35,000 - $15,000)	= $20,000	
Adjusted Cash Income (Loss)		($15,000)

In the above example, the $35,000 farming loss is required to be reduced by the lesser of: the loss incurred ($35,000) or the amount of purchased inventory on hand ($40,000), less $15,000 provided by transitional relief rules. As a result, rather than having a $35,000 loss, the farm will have a $15,000 loss.

In 1990, the farmer has a $10,000 loss before mandatory inventory adjustments (MIA). Assume there is purchased inventory on hand at the end of the year with a value of $10,000.

		1990
Cash Basis (Loss)		($10,000)
Deduct 1989 MIA		($20,000)
Cash Income (Loss)		($30,000)
Add: 1990 MIA being the lesser of		
(A) Amount of Loss	$30,000	
(B) Purchased inventory on hand regardless of year of purchase	$10,000	0
$10,000 - $12,500	= 0	
Adjusted Cash Income (Loss)		($30,000)

(Cont'd)

In the above example, the 1989 MIA of ($20,000) is deducted increasing the farm loss to a total of $30,000. As this is the second year of the transitional relief period, the inventory value of $10,000 is adjusted by $12,500, therefore, no MIA is required to be added resulting in an adjusted farm loss of $30,000.

Elective Method: Using the same example, where the farmer has $40,000 of inventory made up of $25,000 of inventory purchased from prior years and $15,000 of purchased inventory from the current year on hand, the following loss will result using the elective method.

		1989
Cash Basis Loss		($25,000)
Purchased Inventory during year		($10,000)
Cash Income (Loss)		($35,000)
Add: 1989 MIA being the lesser of:		
(A) Amount of Loss	$35,000	
(B) Purchased inventory being the aggregate of old system inventory (1/7 x $25,000) plus new purchases of $15,000= ($3,570 + $15,000)	= $18,570	+$18,570
		($16,430)

As illustrated in the above example, had the farmer chosen the elective method, the deductible loss would have been $16,430 vs. $15,000 under the previous fixed dollar method.

It is important to note that the fixed dollar method will automatically apply unless the taxpayer elects to use the elective method. The important distinction between the two methods is as follows:

1. The fixed dollar transitional rules apply to the value of all purchased inventory on hand, regardless of the year of purchase less the phase in allowance of $15,000, etc.
2. The elective method is an aggregate of current year-end inventory purchases and the percentage allowable for purchased inventory value on hand acquired before 1989 on an increasing scale of one-seventh, etc.

(Cont'd)

The best method of transitional relief depends on the circumstances and the results must be calculated, in order to select the best option, before filing your 1989 tax return.

CONCLUSION: The government has not proceeded with the original modified accrual accounting proposal introduced in the June, 1987 White Paper on Tax Reform. By implementing the mandatory inventory adjustment (MIA) in loss years, however, it is restricting the extent of cash basis losses to the extent of purchased inventory on hand, irrespective of the year(s) the inventory was purchased.

The proposal means losses can only be deducted to the extent they exceed the cost or value of purchased inventory on hand at the end of the taxation year. Any loss disallowed in one year because of the mandatory inventory adjustment, will be carried forward and deducted in calculating income for the next year.

This in effect means that Finance, while maintaining the cash-basis of tax filing, has incorporated some characteristics of the modified accrual accounting proposal. The agricultural industry is now faced with the consequences of a provision that in essence eliminates losses incurred as a result of purchased inventory.

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Contact: Merle Good
556-4237

(Editor's Note: Merle Good is a farm income tax management specialist with Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch in Olds. To explain federal tax reform measures in greater depth, Good has prepared a series of articles. The last article in the series is, Tax reform update - Taxation issues affecting agriculture - Part III.).

For immediate release

Tax Reform Update - Taxation issues affecting agriculture
(Last article in a three-part series)

By MERLE GOOD

On June 13, 1988, the Federal Minister of Finance, Michael Wilson tabled a Ways and Means Motion to implement Phase I of Tax Reform. These reforms were partially presented in the White Paper of June 17, 1987 and subsequently on December 16, 1987 in a Notice of Ways and Means Motion.

There have been substantial modifications to the initial federal White Paper on tax reform proposals since it was introduced in 1987. And Federal Finance Minister Micheal Wilson has recently tabled a Ways and Means Motion to implement phase one of the tax reforms.

The following article provides information on the current status of a number of taxation issues that affect the agriculture industry.

CAPITAL GAINS INCLUSION RATES & ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX (AMT)

Although the taxable portion of a capital gain or "inclusion rate" increases from 1/2 to 2/3 in 1988, 1989 and 3/4 in 1990, $500,000 of capital gain will still remain exempt from regular tax on qualified farm property. If a taxpayer has capital gains that exceed the $500,000 amount, the increased inclusion rate will result in a higher taxable income. As a result of the increased inclusion rate, the untaxable portion which is subject to alternative minimum tax (AMT) will be less thus decreasing the potential AMT liability for property transfers in 1988 and subsequent years.

In reference to Minimum Tax, the government has stated that no minimum tax will be payable in the year of death. This is a welcome change to the Income Tax Act and provides the opportunity for land to be transferred to family members. This transfer would then "bump-up" the V-Day or cost base value of the property to the family without triggering a minimum tax liability.

(Cont'd)

THE $500,000 LIFETIME CAPITAL GAINS EXEMPTION

The announcement by the Federal Finance Minister, Michael Wilson, that farmers and small business corporations will retain the $500,000 lifetime capital gains exemption was welcomed by the farm community.

In order that qualified farm property be eligible for the $500,000 capital gains exemption, the original rules in 1985 stated the property must have been owned by an individual or spouse and farmed in the year of sale or farmed for at least five years by any of the following:

- the taxpayer,
- the taxpayer's spouse,
- child,
- or a family farm partnership or family farm corporation of any of the above.

As a result of the draft legislation, there have been amendments to these conditions that will result in a broader application of the exemption.

It is important to recognize that there are two components that determine whether property qualifies for the exemption or not. These are:

1) Who owns the property,
2) Who has used the property.

Furthermore, there are different rules regarding eligibility for capital gains exemption, depending upon when the property was acquired.

FARM PROPERTY ACQUIRED PRIOR TO JUNE 17th, 1987

The definition of "qualified property" is amended to include property that is OWNED by a family farm partnership, of an individual or spouse of the individual and OWNED by certain trusts. Furthermore, property that was used BY A PARENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL will also qualify. These two technical points are of importance as a partnership can now sell property and have the capital gains exemption apply to the partners. On the second point, a child can rent land back to a parent who is presently engaged in the business of farming or if his parents have used that land in the business of farming for at least five years, then that child would also qualify for the $500,000 capital gains exemption.

(Cont'd)

FARM PROPERTY ACQUIRED AFTER JUNE 17th, 1987

a) Ownership Rules - In order to qualify for the exemption for property acquired after June 17, 1987, the rules relating to the OWNERSHIP of the property are the same except that an individual's parents are included in the category of eligible owners during the time period requirement to meet the business use test. The additional time requirement is that property acquired after June 17, 1987 be held for at least 24 months immediately before disposition to be eligible for the exemption.

b) Business Use Rules - Not only must the property be owned for at least 24 months, but while so owned, in a least two calendar years, the farming gross revenue of the individual, spouse, child, trust or parent of the individual by who the property was used, must exceed the net income from all other sources in the year for that person. Furthermore, that person or trust must be actively engaged on a regular and continuous basis in the business of farming.

Alternatively, the property could be used by a family farm corporation or partnership of the individual, or the spouse, child or parent of the individual in carrying on the business of farming, where such a person was actively engaged on a regular and continuous basis. In this situation there is no requirement of gross revenue exceeding net income from other sources, but only the property be used for at least a 24 month period.

ELIGIBLE CAPITAL PROPERTY

Specifically, three-quarters of the cost of new quota will be included in the eligible capital property pool (vs. the old one-half rule) and written off at seven per cent, rather than 10 per cent. Accordingly, three-quarters of the proceeds of disposition will be deducted from the pool.

(Cont'd)

These rules are effective for fiscal periods commencing after June 30, 1988 for corporations, and after December 31, 1987 for individuals and partnerships. Furthermore, proceeds from the sale of quota after June 17, 1987 must be recognized in the year of disposition, regardless of the year, or years the purchaser is required to make payment.

There has been a major change regarding quotas, whereby only the amount of quota written off (depreciation) will be recognized as income with the remaining balance being treated as a taxable capital gain, eligible for the $500,000 capital gains exemption.

BLOCK AVERAGING - This provision is being phased out effective 1988. In other words, you can continue to block average income for any 5 year period that commences in 1987 or earlier.

CAPITAL COST ALLOWANCE (CCA) AND INVESTMENT TAX CREDITS (ITCs) The old rules will stay in effect until 1990. At that time however, the government proposes an available-for-use restriction. In other words, a farmer must have the asset ready and available for use before depreciation can be claimed. (A combine purchased and not delivered to the farm will not be considered "available-for-use" and accordingly Capital Cost allowance (depreciation) cannot be claimed).

HOME OFFICE EXPENSE - Present rules allow a farmer to deduct rent, capital cost allowance, mortgage interest, property taxes, insurance charges, maintenance, repairs and utility costs related to a home office that is used for business purposes. The new rules will allow farmers these same pro-rated expenses, as long as they meet the following criteria:

- the space is used exclusively on a regular and continuous basis for the purpose of earning income
- the expenses will be limited to the amount of income earned from the business.

This rule is effective for fiscal periods commencing after 1987.

AUTOMOBILE EXPENSES - The Government proposes to introduce intricate rules to restrict the deduction of automobile expenses. Effective in fiscal periods commencing after June 17, 1987, the depreciable capital cost of a passenger vehicle (e.g. family car) acquired after June 17, 1987, will be limited to $20,000.

(Cont'd)

As well, interest costs incurred on purchase will be prorated to business use and cannot exceed $250 for each month the debt on the vehicle is outstanding.

Furthermore, effective for fiscal periods commencing after 1987, any motorized vehicle that is used for business and personal use will be subject to a restriction on the deductibility of fixed expenses (CCA, insurance, license, etc.) The formula will be as follows:

$$\text{Deduction} = \text{Fixed Expenses} \times \frac{\text{Business Kms}}{\text{Total Kms}} \times \frac{\text{Business Kms not to exceed 24000}}{\text{Total Kms not to exceed 24000}}$$

Operating expenses (fuel, repairs, oil, etc.) are prorated as before on the basis of business use to total use.

SECTION 31 - RESTRICTED FARM LOSSES - The Section 31 provision restricting losses for part-time farmers is amended to increase the loss limitations from the present $2,500 plus one-half of the next $5,000 to $2,500 plus one-half of the next $12,500 of losses. This results in a maximum loss level of $8,700 rather than the previous $5,000.

GROSS REVENUE AND PROFIT TESTS - The gross revenue and profit test proposals, which would have determined if a farmer was full or part time have been deferred for further consultations. The existing "reasonable expectation of profit" and chief source of income tests will remain in effect until Finance completes its consultations.

Conclusion: As can be seen, the implications of tax reform are indeed very significant. While the legislation has not yet been passed, the changes will likely go ahead as proposed. It is important that you familiarize yourself with these changes as the new rules result in both adverse and beneficial opportunities for your farm business and estate planning.

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Contact: Merle Good
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(Editor's Note: Merle Good is a farm income tax management specialist with Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch in Olds.)

Take steps to conserve stubble and increase soil moisture

Alberta farmers can take steps at harvest that will help improve soil moisture conditions next year, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Dick Heywood, a water management specialist with the conservation and development branch in Lethbridge, says moisture stored between harvest and seeding next spring will assist in germination and crop growth throughout the coming crop year and should provide improved results at harvest time.

"Now is the time to start planning for next year's crop, " says Heywood. "Soil moisture reserves can be improved by leaving stubble as long as possible while swathing or direct combining. Snow will fill stubble to its height before blowing from the field. This means tall stubble can store more snow or collect more blowing snow."

The specialist says because crops in some areas are short, direct combining will provide taller stubble than swathing, but in areas where there is non-uniform crop growth swathing will be necessary.

By leaving strips of tall stubble interspaced with normal height stubble snow retention can be increased by 10 to 20 percent, he says.

This can be achieved by alternating the height of the cutter bar while swathing or combining. Deflectors or other special swather attachments are also available.

"Many areas in southern and central Alberta are faced with short and/or thin crops which will not provide good stubble for catching snow, storing moisture or protecting the land's surface from erosion," he says. "In those regions a varied stubble height can be created by leaving two or three rows of standing grain at 20 to 40 foot intervals across the field."

(Cont'd)

Take steps to conserve stubble and increase soil moisture (cont'd)

"These techniques, even in a dry winter like 1987, generally increase soil moisture and during a good year, the increase can easily be as great as an inch of soil moisture or sufficient moisture to maintain crop growth for an extra week in a drought situation," says Heywood.

The specialist says another benefit of good moisture management is the reduction of tillage, "because each tillage operation reduces surface residue and its ability to store moisture."

If all tillage is eliminated, fall spraying for winter annuals may be needed to control moisture use by weeds.

"Since summerfallowed land is drier than normal this year, spraying for weed control is a practical alternative," says Heywood. "The destroyed weeds and remaining conserved crop residue will retain more moisture and catch more snow than a conventional cultivated field."

For more information on snow trapping techniques, contact Dick Heywood in Lethbridge at 381-5154."

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Contact: Dick Heywood
381-5154

Agri-News Briefs

LACOMBE RESEARCH STATION PLANS FIELD DAY

The Agriculture Canada research station at Lacombe is holding its annual crops field day August 11 at 1 p.m. Based at the station on the southeast side of Lacombe, the field day agenda includes a tour of plots which demonstrate field crops, forages, weed control measures and soils. Participants are invited to meet research scientists and discuss any concerns.

CORN TOUR SET FOR EARLY SEPTEMBER

A tour of corn production in southern Alberta will get underway at the Rolling Hills hall, southeast of Brooks, September 7 at 1 p.m. A bus will leave the Agriculture Canada research station in Lethbridge at 10:30 a.m. and make pickups in Taber, Vauxhall and Bow Island enroute to Rolling Hills. During the afternoon, stops will include a look at grain and silage corn fields, grain corn performance trials, hybrid test plots, feeding calves and bulls on corn silage, grazing alfalfa and an innovative farmer-made sprayer. A barbecue will follow at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticulture Research Station at Brooks. Anyone interested in attending is asked to contact Alberta Agriculture district offices in Brooks, Bow Island, Medicine Hat, or Lethbridge to pre-register.

SOIL AND RECLAMATION FEATURED AT CONFERENCE

A two-day conference on soil and water conservation and land reclamation is being sponsored by two associations at the Lodge at Kananaskis in late September. The Alberta chapters of the Canadian Land Reclamation Association and the Soil and Water Conservation Society are organizing the September 22 and 23 event. Topics to be covered will include reclamation and conservation ecology, surface water management, soil conservation and soil management. For more information contact Chris Powter or Larry Brocke at 422-2636 in Edmonton.

(Cont'd)

PROTECTIVE COATING PRESERVES FRESHNESS

The protective coating added by processors to fresh fruits and vegetables is intended to preserve the quality of the product and does not present a health hazard to consumers says the Canadian Fresh for Flavour Foundation. Many fruits and vegetables that ripen in the field naturally produce a protective waxy coating known as a cuticle which protects the product from the suns rays. However, during washing and packaging after harvesting this natural coating is removed. To maintain freshness longer processors add coatings which are made from a variety of coatings which Health and Welfare Canada says do not pose a hazard to consumers when applied as directed. The coatings may contain carnauba wax (from palm leaves), shellac (refined from secretions of the lac bug), paraffin (mineral oil and petroleum derivative used on rutabagas), candelilla wax (derived from reed-like plants), beeswax (made from honey producing bees), or sucrose esters of fatty acids. The foundation says the amount of protective coating is very small. For example one gallon of coating is all that is required to protect five tons of apples (about 30,000 medium size apples). Anyone concerned about the coating can remove it by washing the fruit or vegetable in warm water or by peeling the product.

DOMIER ELECTED ASSOCIATION FELLOW

A professor of agricultural engineering at the University of Alberta in Edmonton has been elected a Fellow of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE). Kenneth Domier, who has been professor and chairman of the university's agricultural engineering department for more than 10 years was elected to receive the highest distinction an ASAE member can achieve. Prior to working with the U of A, Domier was head of the department of agricultural engineering at the University of Manitoba. He has conducted research on 26 projects in the power and machinery area.

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AGRI-NEWS

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AUG 29 1988

August 8, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

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For immediate release

$7.6 million payout under slaughter cattle program

Slaughter cattle producers in Alberta, enrolled in the national price stabilization plan, will receive about $7.6 million in stabilization payments in early September, following an announcement of a second quarter payout by the national beef committee.

The committee has announced a $42.45 per head payout under the National Tripartite Beef Stabilization Plan - the third consecutive quarterly payout under the plan.

The stabilization payments will be made on about 180,000 head of slaughter cattle marketed in Alberta during the second quarter of the year. There are 2,644 Alberta producers enrolled in the slaughter program.

The national tripartite plan is designed to protect participating producers from sudden changes in market prices or input costs.

An insurance-type program, the national tripartite price stabilization program makes a payout to participating producers if the national average price for the particular commodity falls below the support price.

Herb Lock, administrator of red meat stabilization plans in Alberta, says the price of feeder cattle and the price of feed are the two major factors that influence the support price levels.

These factors changed dramatically during the second quarter, but both factors have not yet had full effect on the support price formula.

"Increased slaughter cattle marketing in Western Canada, in the second quarter and particularly in June, contributed to a decrease in quarterly averaged prices," he says. "During the quarter there was an eight per cent decline in the price of feeder cattle, however this was offset by a 14 per cent increase in feed costs."

Because there is a three-month lag in including changes in barley prices in the support price formula, the full impact of feed price increases won't be shown in the support price until later in the year.

(Cont'd)

"Although feed prices increased in recent months these are not fully reflected in the second quarter figures," he says. "And the recently announced initial prices for barley also have potential to increase the support price level for upcoming quarters."

Lock says producers reporting by the usual quarterly deadline should expect payment from the program by early September.

Anyone wanting more information on the slaughter cattle stabilization program can call toll-free Alberta Agriculture's Centralized Program Support office in Edmonton at 1-800-232-9479.

Referring to another stabilization program, Lock says for the fourth consecutive quarter no payment is being made under the feeder cattle plan, although rising production costs have potential to change the situation later this year.

He says through the second quarter of 1988 average Canadian feeder prices have been higher than the nationally calculated cash cost of production.

There are 1,460 Alberta producers enrolled in the feeder price stabilization program.

Premiums paid by farmers under both programs will remain unchanged through 1988. Slaughter cattle premiums will remain at $7.40 per head, while feeder cattle premiums will be $4.85 per head.

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Contact: Herb Lock
422-9167

No payout made under hog stabilization plan

The national hog stabilization committee has just announced that no payout will be made for the second quarter of 1988 as the national average selling price for hogs was higher than the support price level.

However, because recent increases in the cost of feed have not yet been calculated into the support price formula, it is expected there is potential for a payout under the program later in the year.

The national tripartite price stabilization program makes a payout to participating producers if, on a national scale, the cost of producing hogs - the support price - exceeds the national average selling price.

Although feed prices have risen significantly during recent months the second quarter support price (April, May, June, 1988) did not show a dramatic increase due to a one quarter lag in including finisher feed prices and a two quarter lag in including starter and grower ration prices.

There are 3,204 Alberta farmers, producing about 85 per cent of the hogs raised in the province, enrolled in the national program. There was a $3.14 per head payout to participating producers at the end of the first quarter of 1988.

Herb Lock, administrator of red meat stabilization plans in Alberta says figures for the second quarter of 1988 show the national average selling price at $147.41 per hundredweight, while the national support price was calculated at $145.04 per hundredweight.

Any producers interested in projected support prices for the remainder of 1988 and early 1989, based on current feed costs and fixed margin calculations can contact Alberta Agriculture's Centralized Support Program office in Edmonton toll free at 1-800-232-9479.

(Cont'd)

Lock says the red meat industry is caught in the classic production cycle which forecasts higher production costs and lower selling prices at least over the short term.

"Red meat producers are essentially faced with a dramatic change from high corn/barley ratios which indicate profitability to low corn/barley ratios which indicate low profitability," he says. "Pork producers in particular are involved in a classic hog production cycle."

He says although Canadian hog production has some fluctuation, the market is greatly influenced by dramatic swings in U.S. hog production. Lock noted that the end of the second quarter represents the eighth consecutive quarter showing hog production increases, with oversupply, leading to lower prices.

The June 30 U.S. Department of Agriculture report indicated U.S. hog production was up eight per cent, double the expected four per cent increase.

The program administrator says one good sign for pork producers would be an increase in beef prices which would swing consumer demand toward other types of meat.

Lock says premiums for producers participating in the hog tripartite stabilization program have been set at $2.90 per head for the third quarter and $2.60 per herd for hogs sold during the October, November, December period.

He also noted producers selling hogs directly to export markets or to local abattoirs are responsible for making premium payments directly to the Centralized Program Support Program office. Premiums are automatically deducted on animals sold directly to the Alberta Pork Producers Marketing Board.

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Contact: Herb Lock
422-9167

Significant changes made to lamb stabilization plan

Sheep producers participating in the national tripartite lamb stabilization should find a more effective and simplified system later this year, following proposals recently made by the programs national committee

The National Tripartite Lamb Stabilization Committee has recommended some significant changes to the national tripartite lamb plan which are expected to be in effect by December 1, 1988.

The changes, which expand the reporting period from the present quarterly basis to an annual basis and will fine tune the price models, are expected to make the plan easier to use and more responsive to market conditions.

As well, the committee is working to develop a feedlot lamb price stabilization, plan which will be of value to feedlot owners who buy feeder lambs. No timetable for implementation of the feedlot plan has been established.

Herb Lock, administrator of red meat stabilization plans in Alberta, says the recommended changes will be explained to sheep producers currently enrolled in the program in a mail out this fall, following approval by participating federal and provincial agriculture ministers.

Alberta is the top lamb producer in Canada followed by Quebec and Ontario.

Producers who have not yet enrolled, will be encouraged to sign up for the simplified version of the plan before November 30. Existing producers who enroll after the deadline will be faced with three years of reduced benefits under the program as a late-entry penalty.

Further details on the proposed program changes are available by calling toll-free Alberta Agriculture's Centralized Program Support office in Edmonton at 1-800-232-9479.

The national tripartite plan is designed to protect Canadian producers from sudden changes in the market by providing a national support price.

(Cont'd)

An insurance-type program, the national tripartite price stabilization program makes a payout to participating producers if the national average price for the particular commodity falls below the support price.

The term "tripartite" refers to the three partners paying equal premiums into the plan - the producer, the provincial government and the federal government.

There was no payout under the lamb plan made to participating producers for the second quarter of 1988, although with a sharp increase in lamb production and increased feed prices, there is potential for stabilization payouts to be made over the next few months.

"During the 1988 second quarter, lamb prices declined between six per cent and 14 per cent in Edmonton and Winnipeg, respectively, while prices in Toronto remained relatively unchanged from the previous quarter," reports the national committee.

"Prices in Toronto were sufficiently high to offset the decline in the West." (Toronto selling prices for the quarter averaged $129.26 per hundredweight, while Edmonton selling prices for the same quarter average $90.24.)

The net result was that the national average selling price for lamb was higher than the support price.

Using national figures for the program price models, the national weighted average lamb price in the second quarter of 1988 was set at $111.65 per hundredweight, while the support price for the quarter was set at $96.56.

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Contact: Herb Lock
422-9167

Play your cards right

If you're like one of the 16 million Canadians who carry at least one credit card, you're probably not totally clear on how interest is calculated on these credit accounts, suggests an Alberta Agriculture economist.

Doug Barlund, a farm management economist with the farm business management branch in Olds, says a study prepared jointly by officials of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in Ottawa and their provincial counterparts agrees that lack of readily available data on credit cards is a major problem. And he notes the confusion is perhaps inevitable.

The study shows the 28.8 per cent interest rate charged by most retail store cards can sometimes cost a consumer less than the 16.5 per cent loaned by most banks.

"Much depends on when the interest clock starts ticking," he says. "With most bank cards, interest is calculated from the day an item is purchased. However, the interest does not show up on the first statement a customer receives."

The card-holder can avoid interest altogether by paying the outstanding balance in full within a given period - usually 21 days. But a part payment - no matter how much -- triggers interest on the full amount from the date of purchase.

"You can have a $500 statement, pay off 99 per cent of it, and still get charged interest on the whole thing," says Barlund. "By contrast, most retail stores charge interest only from the date their statements are issued."

If a customer pays 50 per cent or more of the outstanding balance within 30 days, the amount paid becomes interest free.

The impact of these divergent methods of calculation can be dramatic -- and expensive, he says. Consider the example of buying $850 worth of Christmas presents between December 3 and December 18. You pay $450 of the bill on January 18 and $400 on February 15.

A bank would charge 16.5 per cent interest on the full $850 from the date of purchase until January 18, and on the remaining $400 thereafter.

(Cont'd)

Total interest charges on the bank card come to $19.71 -- more than twice the $9.60 for the retail store card.

"Among the 14 financial institutions surveyed by the report, Toronto Dominion Bank and Canada Trust are the only two that calculate interest from the day statements are issued, rather than from the date of purchase," he says. "However, regardless of whose credit card you're carrying, be aware of how interest is calculated on the account."

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Contact: Doug Barlund
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For immediate release

Top 4-H dairy cattle shown in Red Deer

Fifteen 4-H dairy clubs from across Alberta participated in the 1988 Provincial 4-H Dairy Show and Team Judging Contest held recently at the Red Deer Westerner Exposition Grounds.

Steven Lang of the Viking Multi club earned top individual honors in the judging contest, as well as placing first in the senior Holstein class. Dennis Mckinnon of C.D.C. (Crossfield/Didsbury/Carstairs) was the top individual judge for the Ayrshire class and Maureen Kushak of Sturgeon Valley scored highest overall in the junior Holstein classes. Pat McAllister of Mountainview placed first in the Jersey class as well as winning second overall individual honours.

The top individual in "Reasons" was won by Pat McAllister, with second place going to Steven Lang and Lexi Wright of Mountainview placing third

Mountain View Dairy Club team of Pat McAllister and Lexi and Ella Wright swept the team competition placing first in all the classes plus taking overall honors.

The judging awards were presented at an evening banquet sponsored by the Westerner Exposition and Central Alberta Dairy Pool

Special guest at the official opening of the Provincial 4-H Dairy Show was Tanya Melynk 1988 Alberta Dairy Princess from Edmonton. Judge Dr. Gordon Atkins from Calgary placed the conformation classes, assisted by junior judge, Martin Staub of Rolly View.

In the confirmation classes Chris Thimer from the East Edmonton club led off by capturing champion intermediate calf, with reserve going to Darren Lind of the Twilite club. Chris Thimer from East Edmonton showed the champion calf and Darren Lind of Twilite had the reserve champion entry.

The junior yearling class was won by Tanya Van Sickle of Mountainview. Leonard Congdon of Bashaw had the reserve champion entry for junior yearling. The yearling champion and reserve champion were won by Corry Gross of Rolly View and Lexi Wright from the Mountainview Club.

(Cont'd)

Two of the top dairy cows shown at the Provincial 4-H Dairy Show are shown with judge and owners in the winners circle. Above from left, is Gordon Atkins of Calgary, official judge; Les Lind of Twilite Club with reserve supreme champion; Darren Hipkin of East Edmonton club with supreme champion, and Ray Wedman, of Viewridge Farms near Lacombe who sponsored the awards.

Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H specialist presents Steven Lang, of Viking, top overall individual judge with the Tom Challack Memorial Trophy.

Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H specialist, presents the Harry Bienert Memorial Trophy to Pat McAllister of Mountain View, the top individual in Reasons.

The top 4-H dairy judging team, from left, Ella Wright Pat McAllister and Lexi Wright, of the Mountain View Club.

Darren Hipkin from East Edmonton showed the champion two-year old as well as taking the supreme grand champion honors. Les Linds's cow from the Twilite club was chosen reserve champion in its class plus reserve supreme champion.

Herd class which consists of one of the calves, one of the yearlings and the two-year old was exhibited by East Edmonton while Twilite followed in second.

Dwayne Congdon from Bashaw judged the showmanship class assisted by his sister Beverly Congdon, who is a junior judge. Greg Thimer of East Edmonton took top honors followed by Janyne Mooy of the Lacombe Dairy Club.

In the herdsmanship competition the Twilite dairy club placed first followed by the Viking and Lacombe clubs.

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Contact: Henry Wiegman
427-2541

For immediate release

Forty-six clubs compete in 4-H beef heifer show

Club members from all regions of the province were award winners at the 1988 4-H Beef Heifer Show held recently in Bashaw.

Forty-six clubs from Peace River to Warner were involved in the 12th Annual Show and Judging Competition.

The show is designed to encourage involvement in the 4-H beef breeding project, says Henry Wiegman, Provincial 4-H Agriculture Specialist with Alberta Agriculture, in Edmonton.

"Its goal is to provide a enjoyable educational format for members to display their knowledge of showing, fitting and judging beef cattle", he says.

About 110 competitors were involved in the judging competition in which Michelle Porter of the Spruce Grove club took first and Raymond Zimmer of the Heisler club took second. The Spruce Grove team of Mark Hennig and Michelle and Kevin Porter came in first and the Kleskun Multi team of Jason McQuaig, Larry Love and Lorrie Fraser placed second.

Some 29 teams took part in the team grooming competition in which the team from Armena placed first in the senior division followed by the team from Erskine.

The team members for Armena were Rusty Cox and Roger Knull while the Erskine team was comprised of Vicki McCrindle and Jennifer and Shelley Wilson.

In the junior section the Knee Hill Valley team of Jason Kelly and Greg and Geoff Hoar placed first. Aleah Longshore and Maureen Mappin of the Byemoor club took second in the class.

The show had junior and senior freshman classes which combined points for showmanship and the conformation of the show animal. This class is open to members showing livestock for the first time at this event. Sixty two members participated with Fraser Elliot from the Gladys club placing first in the junior freshman class and Aron Grant from Olds club coming second.

(Cont'd)

Curtis Werenka, of the Sangudo 4-H Beef Club holds the halter of the Supreme Grand Champion Purebred he exhibited at the Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show in Bashaw recently. At left is Ralph Fleweling, of Alix, the official confirmation judge.

Some of the 110 competitors from 46 4-H beef clubs across Alberta join in the official closing parade at the annual Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show and Judging Competition held recently at Bashaw.

Taking the senior freshman classes along with the overall supreme freshman classes were Cathy Penosky from Botha followed by Karmen Hodgson from the Olds club

Again about 110 4-H'ers participated in the showmanship classes, with top intermediate showman Rob Adams from Hastings taking the overall award and top junior showman Aaron Grant from Olds taking second.

The club herdsmanship competition, which is based on the neatness and cleanliness of the stall area plus the presentation of animals, was won by the St. Paul Multi Club.

In the crossbred recorded and purebred conformation classes, 105 entries were displayed and evaluated.

Supreme grand champion purebred was exhibited by Curtis Werenka from the Sangudo club with Lorrie Fraser from the Kleskun club displaying reserve.

Supreme grand champion crossbred was shown by Denis Kotowich from the St. Paul club followed by Luke Jones from Okotoks in reserve.

Major sponsors of this provincial 4-H event were the Bashaw Agriculture Society and Alberta Agriculture.

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Contact: Henry Wiegman
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Pillows keep cows comfy

"Cow pillows" have come to the dairy farm.

The latest in comfort for contented cows is a 4 x 6 foot polypropylene bag that saves dairy farmers' bedding costs and the hassle of trying to keep cow bedding dry and fresh.

"We're not ready to endorse these pillows yet, but everything I've seen and heard about them looks good," Ron Young, an extension dairy specialist for southwest Missouri, told a recent conference at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

Young said several options of cow pillows or mattresses are available, but the one he likes best is designed for individual freestalls.

"The plastic bag is open on one end so you can put in suitable bedding like shavings, straw or rice hulls," Young said in a report to the American Dairy Science Association.

After the bag is filled about 4 to 6 inches deep with bedding, it's closed up, then fastened to the brisket board in front of the freestalls and also at the rear of the stalls.

"The whole installation process takes only about 10 minutes - maybe five minutes if you have the right tools," said Barry Steevens, University of Missouri-Columbia dairy specialist.

The bag should be placed on a firm surface like board, concrete or rubber mat, because placing the bag on dirt can cause it to get damp, said Steevens.

Steevens has installed some of the pillows at the UMC dairy farm west of Columbia; Young put 10 in his own barn near Ozark.

The bags cost about $15 each. Filling each one with bedding takes about 30 seconds. Steevens said the bags could last one to two years, and that would make them a good bargain for dairy farmers.

Some dairymen estimate they are spending $8 to $20 a year to bed their cows, and they have to put in new bedding every 10 to 14 days," Young said. "The cow pillows could be a real improvement over that scenario."

(Cont'd)

Steevens said keeping cows dry and comfortable is important to good milk production.

"Studies show cows will rest 60 per cent of the time if given the chance," he said.

"A cow can sleep on concrete, but she doesn't like it. She like a dry, soft bedding of some sort."

The cows seem to use the bags more during the winter, Steevens noted, perhaps because the bags are warmer than the alternative forms of bedding.

The economic benefit of cow pillows or mattresses will depend on how long they last. "Some northeast Missouri dairymen have used the pillows for more than two years," Young said, "and the cows haven't torn them yet."

Steevens noted that the pillows are made with polypropylene four times heavier than that found in a plastic feed sack.

"The biggest advantage is that the bags shed water and keep bedding dry. The bags should not have to be refilled," Steevens said.

"They keep bedding from being knocked out of the stall into the gutter. Anytime we can save erosion of bedding, we're saving farmers a considerable amount of time and money."

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August 8, 1988
For immediate release

Nanton resident named Spirit River DHE

LINDA HAWK

A southern Alberta native has been appointed Alberta Agriculture's new district home economist in the Peace River district of Spirit River.

Linda Hawk, who was raised on a mixed farm near Nanton, has been appointed to the position replacing Fern Richardson who recently transferred to the DHE post in Leduc.

Susan Meyer, regional home economist in Fairview, in announcing the appointment, says Hawk will be responsible for home economics programming in both the Spirit River and Eaglesham districts.

With a farming background which included experience with 4-H as well as other community and school organizations, Hawk received her bachelor of science degree in home economics from the University of Alberta in Edmonton. She also recently completed a bachelor of education degree.

After previously spending some time in the Grande Prairie area, Hawk says she is pleased to be back in the Peace country. She says her short-term goals include becoming involved in the Spirit River community and getting to know people in Municipal District 133, and Improvement Districts 19 and 20.

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Contact: Linda Hawk
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For immediate release

Hormones help cows beat heat

A bovine growth hormone would help cows maintain good milk production during hot weather, a University of Missouri-Columbia dairy scientist told a recent Edmonton conference.

"Our studies showed cows given the hormone treatments produced about 16 pounds more milk a day than cows that didn't get the hormone," Harold Johnson said in a report to the Americal Dairy Science Association meeting at the University of Alberta.

In laboratory experiments, Johnson subjected cows to temperatures of nearly 37 C (100 F). Without hormone treatments, their milk production dropped to 50 pounds per day. But when the animals were treated with 25 milligrams of growth hormone a day, milk production jumped up to 66 pounds.

The higher milk yields due to the hormone occurred with no increase in body temperature for the cows, which Johnson said was especially critical.

The hormone has not been released for commercial uses yet, but a pharmaceutical company has made a synthetic form of the hormone.

"An implant form of the hormone could be developed so farmers can implant it in their animals once a month much like they now do with the steroids used in beef production," Johnson said. "If the cost of those implants can be kept reasonable, we're talking some real profit potential."

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August 8, 1988
For immediate release

Stamp marks 4-H anniversary

To mark the 75th anniversary of the 4-H program in Canada, the national postal service has unveiled a commemorative postage stamp.

Carrying a picture of a farm setting and the 4-H motto "Learn to do by doing" the 37 cent stamp was released on the anniversary of the founding of the first 4-H club in Canada on August 5, 1913 in Roland, Manitoba.

"The 4-H concept was an immediate success after the first Canadian club was organized," says a Canada Post release. "Departments of Agriculture and government experimental farm systems used 4-H to channel seeds, animals and new agricultural techniques to farmers across Canada. Immigrants particularly benefited by this process, as parents learned new farming methods through their children.

COMMEMORATIVE 4-H STAMP

"By 1931 it was necessary to established a national council to sponsor and co-ordinate activities. Initially it was called the Canadian Council of Boys and Girls Clubs; it became the Canada Council of 4-H Clubs in 1952. Today, it is known as the Canadian 4-H council."

Designed by Debbie Adams of Toronto, the stamp combines a typical rural scene with three young people engaged in a 4-H project, together with the 4-H motto. The computer key board shows how the movement is keeping up to date.

Across Canada there are 5,100 4-H Clubs, with 13,300 volunteer leaders and 48,370 members.

(Cont'd)

Mahlon Weir, supervisor of program services with Alberta Agriculture's 4-H program in Edmonton says provincial clubs join other provinces in recognizing the national anniversary.

Weir says the first 4-H club in Alberta was founded in 1917 in Olds by the principal of Olds College. From that first swine club the movement has grown to include 468 clubs across the province, with 2,431 volunteer leaders and 7,308 4-H club members.

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For immediate release

July offered mixed weather for farmers

Although July brought welcome rainfall and good weather to many parts of Alberta it was a disappointing month for farmers in southeastern Alberta, reports a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Rainfall amounts only 25 per cent to 50 per cent of normal, and hot temperatures caused drought stress to most dryland crops in the southeast, says Peter Dzikowski, agricultural weather resource specialist with the conservation and development branch in Edmonton.

Dzikowski says July is usually dry in the southeast with normal rainfall amounts of 30 to 45 millimetres (mm). Cardston reported 10.9 mm of rain, only 24 per cent of normal for July.

July's dry weather furthered the drought problems which were fuelled by a lack of rainfall in June. The southeast part of the province received only half of normal precipiation in June - which is usually the wettest month of the year for that part of the province.

The July rainfall picture was very different elsewhere in Alberta, says Dzikowski. Most of the northern foothills area and central Alberta reported rainfall amounts well above normal for July.

Edmonton/Namao reported the highest rainfall at 136.9 mm, which is 179 per cent of normal for July. East of Edmonton, the area Cold Lake to Sedgewick had below normal rainfall. Ranfurly was the driest with 19 mm, which is 24 per cent of normal. Further east it was wetter, with Lloydminister reporting 125.5 mm, 159 per cent of normal.

The Peace River district reported rainfall of around 50 mm, which was about 80 per cent of normal. The specialist says that was a much needed change after the double normal rainfall the Peace River region got in June. High Level reported only 26.8 mm in July, only 39 per cent of normal.

July temperatures were near normal for the month in central and northern Alberta, but up to 1°C above normal in southeastern Alberta.

"Overall, July provided fairly good growing conditions in most of central and northern Alberta, but dryland crops continued to suffer from drought stress in southeastern Alberta, says Dzikowski.

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AGRI-NEWS

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August 15, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

For immediate release

Beef markets expected to improve through 1988

Beef cattle markets should improve and remain fairly strong through the second half of 1988, although the same can't be said for hog and lamb prices, according to an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Ron Gietz, a livestock analyst with the market analysis branch in Edmonton, says although beef prices won't be as high as they were last fall, the short-term picture for cattle prices is good.

By contrast, hog and lamb producers who saw record prices last year, have watched as increasing production has forced prices down. Gietz says there may be some marginal improvement in these markets in late 1988 or early 1989.

"The drought in Western Canada and parts of the United States really hasn't had the impact on the beef industry that some expected," he says. "The drought will be affecting the timing of marketing but it hasn't changed the supply situation.

"Slaughter cattle markets should see gradual price improvement into early fall and substantial improvement by late fall. However for hogs it looks like further price declines through to the end of the year with some gradual improvement in 1989. The lamb market, which is very near the breakeven point now, may take yet another dip in early fall with some gradual improvement late in the year."

Gietz made his comments in the second quarter livestock situation and outlook which has just been released.

Looking at slaughter cattle prices, Gietz says Alberta prices dropped during the second quarter because of a large number of cattle coming to market from mid-April onwards.

However, as the run of cattle declines he expects prices for Alberta fed steers to improve to the $78 to $80 per hundredweight (cwt) range by early fall and rise to between $80 and $84 per cwt by late fall. As supplies tighten, further price improvement is expected in the first quarter of 1989.

(Cont'd)

In spite of a dramatic increase in the cost of barley, Gietz says it hasn't had significant impact on feeder cattle prices. He says there is a "favorable" outlook for feeder cattle prices through to mid-1989.

He says 500 to 600 pound calves should be in the $115 to $120 per cwt range this fall, compared to a $120 to $130 per cwt range a year ago. Heavier calves, at about 800 pounds, should be in the $90 to $95 per cwt range this year compared to $100 or more per cwt last fall.

Looking at hog markets he says nine and 11 per cent production increases in Canada and the United States, respectively, in the second quarter have contributed to a large supply of meat and lower prices.

The specialist says Alberta is now producing more hogs than can be slaughtered in a single shift at processing plants, which means more live hogs are being exported to the U.S. markets.

Hog output in Canada and the U.S. is expected to remain high for the remainder of 1988 and early in 1989.

Because of increased feed cost he says producers will see tighter margins and short-term negative margins during the second half of the year.

With second-quarter hog prices averaging about $64 per cwt, Gietz predicted third-quarter prices to slide to about $56 to $61 per cwt and fourth quarter prices to drop to $50 to $55 per cwt. Some gradual price improvement is expected by the second quarter of 1989.

Alberta sheep producers have seen two records set in the last year. Record high prices in 1987 and a record price drop in the second quarter of 1988.

Gietz says several factors have contributed to an increased supply of lamb which has forced the Alberta price to drop about 30 per cent over the last five weeks.

Supplies are expected to keep prices down through to the end of the year. Gietz says prices now in the $63 to $66 per cwt range may drop to about $60 in October and improve to about $70 per cwt by late fall or early winter.

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Trade developments good for beef and hog producers

Two recent international trade developments are expected to be good news for Alberta beef and hog producers, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

A move by Japan to liberalize its beef import quotas and a review by U.S. trade officials which could reduce duties on Canadian live hog exports bode well for Alberta producers, says Ron Gietz a livestock analyst with the department's market analysis branch in Edmonton.

Gietz says the Japanese move will have a "substantial" impact on world beef trade. And reduced duties could provide refunds to Alberta producers who sold hogs to the U.S. over the last three years, as well as make future sales more profitable.

"By far the most significant beef trade news in the second quarter of 1988 was the announcement, after prolonged negotiations, of an agreement between the U.S. and Japan calling for the complete elimination of Japanese import quotas on beef and citrus products over the next three years," says Gietz in his quarterly report.

"Terms of the agreement specify a phase out of import quotas on beef by April 1, 1991. Japan will be permitted to temporarily increase duties on beef during a second three-year adjustment period, at the end of which the Japanese market for beef will be completely liberalized and open to all exporters."

Gietz says the import management operations of Japan's Livestock Industry Promotion Corporation will be phased out in the initial three-year period.

"Although there was no immediate price effect of this agreement, the long run implications of the agreement on world beef trade are likely to be substantial," he says.

Referring to hog exports, the specialist says a reduction in duties will have a "significant" impact on Alberta hog producers.

(Cont'd)

The countervailing duty of 4.39 cents per pound was imposed in 1985 to compensate the U.S. industry for what it considered was a negative impact caused by Canadian hogs moving south of the border.

However it appears U.S. officials have found that the impact is not as significant as first believed.

"Acting on a request of the Canadian Pork Council, the U.S. Commerce Department has reviewed the countervailing duties on live hog exports from Canada for the 1985/86 marketing year and has recommended the duty for that period be reduced by one-half," says Gietz.

"The decision is currently undergoing final review by all concerned parties, with a final ruling expected by the end of September. If accepted in its current form, the ruling would result in a refund being paid to documented exporters who shipped hogs to the U.S. in the 1985/86 marketing year."

The specialist says the refund would amount to 2.19 cents per pound, or half of the 4.39 cent original levy.

It is likely that once the review process for the 1985/86 marketing year is complete, a request will be made by the pork council for a review of 1986/87 and 1987/88 marketing years.

"More importantly from an outlook point of view, the levy on future exports will likely be reduced to 2.2 cents per pound, effective within 30 days from the final announcement. This is a significant development in light of the increase in live hog exports in the past two quarters, particularly in Western Canada," says Gietz.

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August 15, 1988
For immediate release

"Great potential" for Angora goat industry

It's been more than 20 years since a "fast talking, slow walking" guy by the name of Mohair Sam made the hit parade in a song by Charlie Rich, but the threads that made Sam famous in late 1965 are now launching a new industry in Alberta.

Although it has been used in fabrics for centuries, Mohair is just emerging here as an agricultural commodity, says an industry spokesman.

And with more than 50 Alberta producers raising internationally-recognized breeding stock and shearing more than 20,000 pounds of Mohair a year, Dorothy Broadbent of Ponoka says there is "great potential" for the Angora goat industry.

ALBERTA ANGORA GOAT

Angora goats, with long sweeping horns and tight curly fleece, are producers of the highly durable, warm and naturally fire-resistant Mohair fibre which is used in everything from fine sweaters and suits to draperies and carpets.

Often mistaken as diminutive sheep, the goats were first domesticated in the Ankara region of Turkey more than 2,400 years ago. It is believed Angora is a version of Ankara. The same region of the Asian country also produces Angora rabbits which are famous for their fur as well.

Broadbent, president of the Alberta Mohair Producers Association, and an Angora goat technician with Alberta Agriculture, says although the industry is still on wobbly legs it gains vitality each year.

"I believe as the industry grows there is great potential for Angora producers in Alberta," says Broadbent, a goat producer herself near Ponoka.

(Cont'd)

"Sale of our breeding stock, particularly to Britain and other parts of Europe, has been quite successful in the last few years, although that may be coming to an end.

"But as Angora goat production expands in Alberta and we produce more fleece, the opportunities for our own grading system, our own processing and production of Mohair thread and fabric and ability to manufacture finished Mohair products become possible."

Angora goats have been raised in Alberta for 10 to 15 years. A couple of the 50 members of the Alberta Mohair producers association have large flocks of 300 or more head, although most operations are small - in the 20 to 50 head range - says Broadbent.

While Alberta producers have put the emphasis on raising breeding stock which can sell for about $3,000 apiece, the association spokesman says the British and European market is declining as it becomes saturated.

"There are still some opportunities and we hope to be able to develop other export markets for breeding stock in the future, but it may be time for the Alberta industry to expand toward commercial goat production and subsequently fleece production," says Broadbent.

At present the fleece produced in Alberta is marketed by the Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers and sold to processors in Britain. There are no qualified Mohair graders or processors in Canada.

Although the value of the Mohair is determined by fashion trends, Broadbent says it is a worthwhile commodity. Last year the fine kid hair which usually comes from younger animals sold for about $6 a pound while the coarser adult hair sold for about $2.50 a pound.

Broadbent says with an improved grading system in Canada, Mohair could be sorted into five or six different grades ranging from fine to coarse, providing better returns to producers.

High fleece producers, Angora goats have to be sheared twice a year, with mature animals yielding as much as 20 to 30 pounds of Mohair at each shearing. The fleece grows at a rate of about one inch a month.

(Cont'd)

While Texas and South Africa are the largest Angora goat producers in the world, Alberta-raised goats are recognized for their quality, says Broadbent. In contrast to the open range conditions in Texas and Africa, Alberta goats are more intensively managed. Improved feeding and care produces a better quality Mohair as well as higher flock reproduction rate. While Texas flocks may have a kid survival rate of 40 per cent, Alberta flocks have a 150 to 200 per cent kid survival rate. (It is routine for mature Alberta goats to raise two kids a year.)

A hearty variety of goat, Angoras do well in rough pastures and rocky conditions and co-exist well with sheep or other livestock, says Broadbent. She says the adults need shelter from the rain, but do well in Alberta winters with minimal extra care. However the newborn kids are quite delicate, and need good shelter and a heat lamp for the first few days after birth.

"We need to develop an industry which can support a fleece processing mill here in Alberta," says Broadbent. "Rather than export our raw products we need to work towards producing Mohair fabrics and clothing for retail sale in the province. The hair that we sell here for $6 a pound, ends up as finished fabric in Britain that sells for $60 a metre. There's no reason why we can't do that in Alberta."

Broadbent says the association was created to help existing as well as potential Angora goat producers. For more information contact Dorothy Broadbent, R.R. 3, Ponoka, T0C 2H0.

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August 15, 1988 00

For immediate release

Sale planned of first performance tested Angora goats

SOME OF THE 25 ANGORA GOATS ON TEST AT OLDS COLLEGE THIS SUMMER

The top yearling Angora goat bucks in Alberta will be sold in Olds later this month in the first sale in Canada of performance tested Angora goats.

The August 27 sale at the Olds College Riding Arena follows a 120-day performance test involving goats supplied by 11 Alberta and B.C. breeders.

Cathy Gallivan, Alberta Agriculture's sheep and goat specialist in Airdrie, says the Olds performance test and sale will set the standard for the Angora goat industry in Canada.

"As the Angora goat industry becomes more established, more breeders and producers want to see a measure of how these animals perform," she says.

(Cont'd)

"With some of this breeding stock selling for about $3,000 a head, producers want more than just a visual assessment of the goats they are buying. The performance test provides an official rating on the quality and quantity of the fleece produced, along with an evaluation of the physical qualities of each animal."

The first-ever Canadian performance test - expected to become an annual project - was held at Olds College which is also home of the long-standing Alberta Ram Test Station.

Nine Alberta and two B.C. breeders registered 25 yearling Angora bucks for the test which ran from April 6 to August 2. The goats were sheared and weighed at both the beginning and end of the test period. Indexes were calculated for each goat based on clean fleece weight, average fibre diameter, average daily gain and final body weight.

As well, each goat was visually scored for such traits as face, neck and belly cover, and other features. Joe David Ross, of Sonora, Texas - the heartland of Angora goat production in North America - made this evaluation for the test station prior to the final shearing.

Only the top end of the 25 bucks on test (those animals which index over 100 and pass a physical cull) will be sold at the 2 p.m. sale.

Gallivan says although the Angora industry is relatively new in Alberta, provincial breeders have already built an international reputation for the quality of animals raised here.

The specialist says with much of Alberta's top breeding stock being sold to European producers, the performance test will provide an official rating of quality.

"Only genetically superior animals will be sold from the performance test so buyers can have even greater confidence in the quality of animals they will be using to improve production in their home flocks," she says.

For more information on the Angora Goat Performance Test Sale contact Cathy Gallivan in Airdrie at 948-8517.

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August 15, 1988
For immediate release

Top barrel racer will conduct clinics

An award winning rodeo rider from southern Alberta will conduct two clinics on training barrel racing and games horses during the "Alberta Breeds for the World" show at Spruce Meadows, near Calgary, in early September.

Sandy Hein of Granum, who has won several Canadian and U.S. titles will be one of the featured speakers at the equine showcase held in conjunction with the Spruce Meadows Masters show jumping competition and Equi-Fair, September 7 to 11.

SANDY HEIN MAKES A TURN DURING A BARREL RACING EVENT

Hein will provide clinics in the Breeders Hall, September 8 at 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. and September 9 at 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

The Granum rider will pass on the training requirements to make a barrel horse a winner at rodeos, breed show competitions or local gymkhanas.

(Cont'd)

Few riders have the experience and success of Hein in training these specialized equine athletes. She won the Canadian Girls Rodeo Association Barrel Race Futurity in 1980, 1982 and 1986 and was Reserve Champion in 1983 and 1985.

Also in 1985 she won the Canadian Quarter Horse Association National Pole Bending Championship and Reserve National Barrel Racer Championship.

Hein has won barrel races at many professional rodeos throughout Canada and the United States and was highlighted by placing second at the Canadian National Finals Rodeo in Edmonton, riding "Docs Tundra", a horse she trained herself.

Les Burwash, supervisor of Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch, says the clinics will be of interest to young aspiring barrel racers as well as experienced riders looking for knowledge on improving their training techniques.

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Purebred livestock marketing conference planned for December

The first marketing conference devoted to the Alberta purebred livestock industry has been scheduled for December 14 and 15 at the Capri Motor Hotel in Red Deer.

Drew Mundie, of Innisfail, vice-president of the Alberta Canada All Breeds Association (ACABA) says he hopes the conference becomes an annual event.

"We hope to inform cattle breeders about the opportunities afforded them as a result of ACABA's extensive promotional activities at major livestock shows in the United States," he says.

"We also plan to use the conference to highlight marketing opportunities in other areas of the world, particularly the United Kingdom and Japan."

Dr. Roger Hunsely, executive director of the American Shorthorn Association will be one of the international speakers at the conference.

Hunsley who was a recent feature speaker at the Canadian Charolais Association National Breeders School in Olds, will speak on "The Breed Association of the Future".

He is also expected to inform breeders about the types of cattle now in demand in the United States.

"We are very pleased to be able to have Dr. Hunsley participate at our conference," says Mundie. "We will announce other international speakers on the program once they have been confirmed. Our intention at ACABA is to have international people inform Alberta breeders about the types of cattle and livestock genetics that will be in demand during the 1990s. Breeders who want to be on the leading edge of marketing opportunities in the future will want to attend.

Although the conference is sponsored by ACABA and designed for the Alberta purebred livestock industry commercial cattle producers are welcome.

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Contact: Drew Mundie
227-2084

For immediate release

Vegetable storage specialist appointed in Brooks

A specialist in dealing with problems related to storage of potatoes and other vegetables has recently joined the staff at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center in Brooks.

Dr. Jim Holley, a plant pathologist, who most recently worked with Agriculture Canada in Summerland, B.C. has assumed the position of storage physiologist/plant pathologist previously held by Dr. Ken Mallett.

Mallet recently resigned his Brooks post to accept a job with the Northern Forestry Centre in Edmonton.

Holley's appointment was announced by Tom Krahn, head at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center.

Holley's efforts will be divided between research, extension and service to the industry. He will work with disorders related to storage of potatoes, other vegetables, flowers and nursery stock. Special attention will be given to quality of stored potatoes for processing.

The specialist will also work with field and storage diseases of the same crops.

Holley obtained his Ph.D. in plant pathology in 1984 from the University of Guelph where he worked with the effects of cultivar resistance and physiological stress on rates of development of potato early blight.

He later worked at Agriculture Canada in Fredericton with DAYCAST, a potato late blight forecasting program which used both disease incidence and microclimatic measurement to predict disease development.

Most recently he worked for Agriculture Canada in Summerland with a bacterial biological control agent which may be useful in controlling apple crown rot disease.

"Jim's experiences with vegetables, tree fruits and environmental monitoring will be definite assets in his new position as storage physiologist/pathologist at Brooks," says Krahn.

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Contact: Dr. Jim Holley
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For immediate release

New loans act expanded, more flexible

A long-standing federal farm improvement loan program - which represents one option for farmers planning to borrow money - has been expanded and made more flexible, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Doug Barlund, a farm management economist in Olds says the former Farm Improvement Loans Act (FIL) which has been revamped to allow for a higher lending limit, will now include farmer-owned marketing co-ops, and now allows refinancing of existing debts and offers fixed interest rates.

The new act that came into place this spring is called the Farm Improvement and Marketing Co-operatives Loans Act (FIMCLA).

FIMCLA offers farm improvement loans to farming individuals, partnerships or corporations for most farm business purposes with a new $250,000 individual loan limit up from the previous $100,000 limit.

The program does not provide loans for improvements to the family dwelling, quota purchases, short-term operating loans and loans for short-term feeder livestock, however the new act also allows refinancing or consolidation of existing loans that qualified under the old FIL Act.

Barlund, a specialist with the department's farm business management branch, says an individual farmer may have one or more loans at any one time, up to a maximum combined amount of $250,000.

Under the old FIL act this limit was $100,000. Term of repayment is 15 years on land purchases, and 10 years for most other purposes.

Also new is the option of floating or fixed interest rates.

"As a borrower you have the choice of repaying the loan at floating bank prime rate plus one per cent, or at a fixed rate ranging from prime plus 1.25 per cent to prime plus 2.25, depending on how long the rate is fixed," says Barlund.

"When you borrow money under this Act from your favorite chartered bank, Alberta Treasury Branch, or credit union, you'll pay a registration fee of one-half of one per cent of the amount of the loan. Your lender may also charge a loan administration fee of one-quarter of one per cent of the amount of the loan to a maximum of $250."

(Cont'd)

Farm marketing co-operatives incorporated under the laws of the province can also borrow under FIMCLA. Co-ops can refinance or consolidate existing loans. However, all members of the co-op must be eligible, as individuals, for farm improvement loans.

Maximum combined amount of co-operative loans is $3 million. However, all loans over $250,000 must be approved by the federal minister of agriculture. These loans have a maximum term of 20 years on land or 10 years on most other eligible purchases. Interest rates and registration and administration fees are the same as for farm improvement loans. Loans are made up to 80 per cent of the value of the assets purchased with loan funds.

"The changes to this federal lending act have certainly increased its flexibility," says the economist. "However, don't look on this as a source of cheap financing. Your lender is legislated to lend at a minimum of prime plus one per cent and all normal prudent lending criteria will be followed."

He says for more information on these changes farmers should talk to the lending officer at the their banking institution.

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Agri-News Briefs

BUDGET NOW FOR HARVESTING RATES

Farmers planning to hire swathing, combining and grain hauling services should check the range of rates charged by Alberta contractors, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist. Garth Nickorick, a farm management economist with the farm business management branch in Olds, says many of the available contractors are listed in the department's directory of custom operators. Quoting 1987 prices, Nickorick says rates aren't expected to change dramatically this year. Swathing costs will be between $4 and $6 per acre or $35 to $40 per hour, while combining rate will be between $10 to $14 per acre or $90 to $125 per hour. Nickorick says although the hourly rate for large machines will be at the higher end of the scale, it should work out to be about the same cost on a per-acre basis The rate for combining irrigated grain crops, which tend to be heavier work for the machine, are between $14 and $20 per acre. The cost of trucking grain one or two miles from the field to storage facilities will range from $2 to $4 per acre. Nickorick says a list of custom harvesting operators is included in the Directory of Custom Operators in Alberta - 1987, (Agdex - 825-17). The directory is available from Alberta Agriculture district offices, from the Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0; or Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. For more information on hourly and per acre rate contact Garth Nickorick in Olds at 556-4247 or RITE 154-1247.

CONFERENCE PLANNED ON ALCOHOL FUELS

A Winnipeg-based energy institute is planning a two-day conference in early October to discuss the use of alcohol fuels for transportation in Canada. BioMass Energy Institute is organizing the Canadian Power Alcohol fuel conference for October 3 and 4 at the International Inn in Winnipeg. Several speakers have been lined up to talk about Canadian and provincial policy development and studies done in the area of alcohol fuel production. For more information on the conference contact Biomass Energy Institute in Winnipeg at (204) 257-3891.

(Cont'd)

CORN TOUR SET FOR EARLY SEPTEMBER

A tour of corn production in southern Alberta will get underway at the Rolling Hills hall, southeast of Brooks, September 7 at 1 p.m. A bus will leave the Agriculture Canada research station in Lethbridge at 10:30 a.m. and make pickups in Taber, Vauxhall and Bow Island enroute to Rolling Hills. During the afternoon, stops will include a look at grain and silage corn fields, grain corn performance trials, hybrid test plots, feeding calves and bulls on corn silage, grazing alfalfa and an innovative farmer-made sprayer. A barbecue will follow at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticulture Research Station at Brooks. Anyone interested in attending is asked to contact Alberta Agriculture district offices in Brooks, Bow Island, Medicine Hat or Lethbridge to pre-register.

ALBERTA FEED PEA EXCHANGE ESTABLISHED

Buyers and sellers of feed peas are urged to register for a new free exchange service established by the Alberta Grain Commission and the Pulse Growers Association of Alberta. Any producers interested in selling feed peas, or buyers wanting to locate feed peas can register with the service which will put them in easy contact with each other. User cards, completed by the buyers and sellers, highlight the necessary information the producer/seller should provide and what the buyer/user can expect. On the reverse side of the card is a simple chart that provides an idea of where pea prices are in relation to soymeal and barley prices. The user cards are available through Alberta Agriculture district offices, swine specialists and the pulse growers association. For more information contact the exchange through its toll free telephone service at 1-800-232-1983 or call the Alberta Grain Commission in Edmotnon at 427-7329.

SOIL AND RECLAMATION FEATURED AT CONFERENCE

A two-day conference on soil and water conservation and land reclamation is being sponsored by two associations at the Lodge at Kananaskis in late September. The Alberta chapters of the Canadian Land Reclamation Association and the Soil and Water Conservation Society are organizing the September 22 and 23 event. For more information contact Chris Powter or Larry Brocke at 422-2636 in Edmonton.

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AGRI-NEWS

SEP - 7 1988

August 22, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

For immediate release

Yield forecast favorable for most of Alberta

The 1988 drought will have significant impact on crop yields in some regions of Alberta this fall, but crop reporters with Alberta Agriculture say much of the province is expecting average to above average production.

With harvest of fall seeded crops nearly complete and combining of spring seeded crops about to begin, predictions for yields range from below normal in dryland areas of southern Alberta, to average in central Alberta and above average in northern Alberta.

Janet Nasse and Lynn Johnston, statisticians with the department in Edmonton, say as of mid-August there is a wide range of conditions both within and among regions.

Johnston says once farmers begin combining spring-seeded crops over the next couple weeks a more accurate forecast of per-acre yield averages can be made. She says rain in early August improved drought-stressed crops in southern Alberta and helped fill seed heads in crops in northern Alberta.

Nasse says drought conditions have sped up crop maturity in the dryland areas of southern Alberta producing yields in spring wheat ranging from five to 40 bushels per acre. Yields in irrigated areas have ranged from average to above average.

Weather conditions have also produced some disease and insect problems in canola crops.

The statisticians report the first cut of hay, in most regions, is generally rated to be both fair in quantity and quality. A second cut is underway where regrowth is adequate.

Although pasture conditions vary, cattle are reported to be in good condition across the province as farmers have provided feed supplementation this summer in the driest areas.

Looking at the province from north to south, the Peace River Region and parts of the northwest agricultural region, headquartered in Barrhead, expect to have average to above average crop yields.

(Cont'd)

Above average rainfall between April and August contributed to the good yield prospects, although in some cases too much rain has been a problem.

Cool, wet conditions have delayed maturation of cereal crops and also delayed harvest of the first cut of hay. In many areas, hay is expected to be of poor quality either because it was rained on in the windrow or because it became too mature before it was cut. There is also a risk of early frost damaging some of the late-seeded crops before they mature.

The western half of the northeast agricultural region, headquartered in Vermilion, is expected to have average to above normal yields, while the east and southeastern districts are expected to have below average yields.

Timely rainfall in the region has helped to fill out crops and allow for the regrowth of hay.

Crops in the north central region, headquartered in Red Deer, show greater drought effects, particularly in the eastern farming areas. Although rainfall will help fill out crops, yields are generally expected to be below average.

Crop production in the western part of the region (west of Highway 2), which received timely rainfall, is expected to be normal.

Both the south central region headquartered in Airdrie and the southern region, headquartered in Lethbridge, continue to show the worst effects of the continued dry weather.

In the dryland farming areas in both regions crops suffered from drought as well as heat stress, which affected yield and rate of maturity.

Rain came too late in the Airdrie region to help early seeded crops, but it should benefit late seeded crops as well as pasture and second cut hay crops. Most cereals have headed out and are generally in fair condition, but poor crops are reported in some districts. Yields on spring wheat are expected to range from five bushels per acre at Oyen to 40 bushels per acre in the Rumsey/Mundare area near Drumheller.

In the southern region spring seeded cereal crops are almost all heading out and are generally in fair condition. Poor crops are reported at Claresholm and Vulcan, however.

(Cont'd)

Yield expectations on dryland farms range from 10 to 20 bushels per acre for spring wheat; 10 to 25 bushels per acre for oats; 15 to 25 bushels per acre for barley and 10 to 20 bushels per acre for canola.

In the irrigated areas yields are expected to range from 50 to 65 bushels per acre for wheat; 70 to 80 bushels per acre for oats; 70 to 90 bushels per acre for barley and 35 to 50 bushels per acre for canola.

Little or no hay was cut in the worst affected dryland areas, although most irrigation farmers have completed their second cut of hay. Quality is rated as good.

Livestock in the two southern regions is rated in fair to good condition, however stock water is in short supply and pastures are in fair to poor condition.

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Contact: Janet Nasse
Lynn Johnston
427-4011

For immediate release

Farmers warned to protect soil this fall

Farmers in areas severely affected by drought this year could face more serious soil erosion problems if they don't apply some conservation measures this fall.

A specialist with Alberta Agriculture in Airdrie says producers should be mindful of soil conservation at all times, but warns that those in southern, southeast and east central Alberta face a particularly high risk of erosion.

John Timmermans, a soil conservation specialist in Airdrie, says because of the drought, crop yields are lower than normal over about one-third of the province.

"That means crop residue left after harvest is also reduced. On fields to be summerfallowed next year this crop residue is all the protection soils will have from erosion until mid-June 1990," he says.

"Those are the fields that should be sprayed with herbicide such as 2,4-D this fall to control winter annuals. This fall spraying will delay the need for cultivating summerfallow until well into next summer.

"Furthermore, standing stubble offers better moisture conservation through snow trapping. If spring rains are adequate, this additional moisture may permit recropping next year."

Timmermans says proper management now could save a producer the money and headache of trying to take emergency action to correct an erosion problem once it has started.

He says the expectation of snowfall to protect the soil offers false security. If the snow doesn't come the fields need some protection and, referring to 1988, he noted that the worst erosion can occur after winter has ended.

"This was the case earlier this year when more than two million acres of land in Alberta were affected by wind erosion in May," he says. "Even areas in central Alberta where continuous cropping is commonly practiced, which were considered safe from erosion, experienced serious soil drifting problems last spring."

(Cont'd)

On fields with very little cover, he says August is a good time to seed a cover crop of any spring cereal grains which will help hold the soil in place. Direct seeding of winter wheat or fall rye into stubble is another method which can help maintain protective cover.

"A lack of early preventive measures now when harvest is beginning may lead to expensive emergency controls later," he says. "Farmers need to realize that the best and cheapest shelterbelt or windbreak they can find is stubble that is left on the field. We just have to learn how to manage it better. This is escpecially important now when we know drought has significantly reduced residue cover."

For more information on soil conservation measures contact John Timmermans at the Alberta Agriculture regional office in Airdrie at 948-8539.

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Contact: John Timmermans
948-8539

Pasture project produces benefits for forage association members

A group of farmers northeast of Edmonton are proud of a rotational grazing system which is not only producing good results for the cattle using the 150-acre pasture, but has helped many improve their livestock management at home.

The Pembina Forage Association pasture project, just north of Westlock, has demonstrated for the last decade that with proper fencing and management a relatively high carrying capacity can be achieved from a small acreage.

Don Petryshen, forage association president who farms nearby, says the pasture project has been a good learning experience.

"I was just like everyone else who was sceptical about whether this type of intensive pasture management was going to work," he said. "Before I joined the association I would drive by the pasture at a snail's pace trying to see what was happening.

"After I became involved in the association I learned what benefits could be achieved through improved management. I now use a similar rotational grazing system at home with my full herd."

Petryshen made his comments at the recent Pembina Forage Association field day which drew about 150 farmer-members and visitors for a full-day tour of association projects.

The Pembina group, which is the one of the oldest forage associations in Alberta, is dedicated to helping producers get the most out of their livestock, pasture and hay production.

This is the first year the pasture project has been managed for heifers. Since it was established in 1979 the grassland has supported about 200 head of steers each summer.

But Luanne Berjian, association manager, says the class of cattle was changed this year to better reflect the needs of association members.

(Cont'd)

LUANNE BERJIAN, PEMBINA FORAGE ASSOCIATION MANAGER AND DON PETRYSHEN, ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT CHECK THE CONDITION OF GRASS DURING RECENT FEILD DAY

She says it was becoming more difficult for participating farmers to supply the yearling steers for the pasture. However, many were interested in an improved pasture to handle replacement heifers.

This year the pasture, which is divided into 16 paddocks of about 10 acres each, is supporting 144 heifers. Brought to pasture June 13 with an average weight of 814 pounds, the heifers (at the time of the tour) had completed their third rotation of the pastures.

Berjian says the cattle are being rotated through the pastures at a sufficient rate to keep the grass in a vegetative or growth stage and prevent it from heading out.

(Cont'd)

Pasture projects produce benefits for forage association members (cont'd)

In the first half of the grazing season the heifers have produced average daily weight gains of 1.6 pounds. Depending on forage growing conditions the heifers are expected to remain on pasture until late fall.

The pasture project which was seeded in 1979 to a mixture of brome, timothy, meadow foxtail and alsike clover, has never been reseeded. The paddocks have been fertilized annually with straight nitrogen, although this year in a Farming for the Future research project half the area has been fertilized with a blend of nitrogen, phosphorous and potash to determine if there is any variation in yield.

Over its 10-year history as a steer pasture the project produced average daily gains of more than two pounds a day in about 120 days of grazing. Another measure of production was calculated at 292 pounds of weight gain per acre per season.

"These pasture projects have provided invaluable information to members of the association," says Petryshen. "Many people like myself have learned how to improve production through more intensive management of our land, we have seen how different forage types respond to grazing pressure, we have seen what impact fertilizer has on pasture and learned many other aspects of livestock and forage management."

The association projects are managed by Berjian and a summer assistant, along with volunteer help from members and technical assistance from Alberta Agriculture district and regional staff.

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Contact: Luane Berjian 349-4546 Don Petryshen 349-2383 Rick Bjorge 349-4465

For immediate release

Mosquitoes sting Alberta hog producers

Mosquitoes, and not a change in meat inspection policy, are putting the sting on the profit margins of many Alberta pork producers.

The pesky insects which have flourished with improved rainfall in many parts of Alberta are having an impact on the quality of hog carcasses being processed by slaughter plants.

With federal meat inspectors requiring that injured portions of the carcass be trimmed, some hog producers are being paid for fewer pounds of pork

Dr. Garry Finell, with Alberta Agriculture's health management branch in Edmonton, says although reports of affected animals have been as high as 15 per cent of hogs in a shipment, the average indicates six to seven per cent of shipments are affected. Dockage or trim amounts to about four pounds per affected animal.

Finell says while many producers think there has been change in Agriculture Canada's meat inspection policy, it boils down to a bad mosquito season.

"Some Alberta hog producers have voiced concern about the increasing number of slaughter hogs being docked because of trimmable demerits," he says. "Trimmable demerits refer to tissue which is removed from a carcass to ensure wholesomeness. The packer pays producers for the usable carcass after the trim has been removed.

"Although producers expect the occasional trimmable demerit, the number reported on sales slips has increased in past weeks. Producers find reports with "skin conditions" or "skin disease" given as the reason for the trim."

Dr. Larry Miller, veterinarian in charge of Fletcher's plant in Red Deer explaines the situation.

(Cont'd)

Some pigs, not unlike young children, are extremely sensitive to mosquito bites, he says. These individuals develop raised red areas, referred to as wheals, as an allergic response to the bite. After slaughter and processing to remove the hair from the carcass, these raised areas show up as blue stained bumps.

These blue areas decrease the aesthetic value of the carcasses. Buyers who are accustomed to purchasing wholesome products do so more readily after the areas are trimmed.

Miller pointed out that mosquito bites are not the only cause of skin lesions. Pigs housed in extremely dirty environments and pigs affected by mange mites can also develop skin lesions significant enough to require trim at slaughter.

He says producers should be aware that it is the mosquito rather than a change in federal inspection policy which is causing the sting on their cash receipts.

The problem should disappear soon after the first killing frost.

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Contact: Dr. Garry Finell
436-9343

August 22, 1988 00

For immediate release

Clinic provides advice on loading horses

Horse owners, from hobbyists to competitors, will be interested in two clinics in Calgary in early September on how to load a horse into a trailer.

Bill Collins, of Calgary, one of Alberta's leading authorities on horse handling and horse care will provide the two clinics September 7 and 11 as part of Equi-Fair held in conjunction with the Spruce Meadows show jumping competition.

BILL COLLINS

Collins who has conducted this and other clinics throughout Canada and northern United States is adept at conveying his experiences and knowledge to others.

His years of experience in hauling horses as a professional calf roper and Quarter Horse trainer has afforded him the opportunity to learn what is required to get a horse to a competition not only in a safe manner but ready to compete at the peak of its ability.

Collins' skill with horses is marked by a long list of awards and achievements. During his career he was named Canadian Champion Calf Roper four times and trainer and rider of the open Canadian Champion Cutting Horse 11 times. One highlight as a trainer and horsemanship educator was giving cutting horse riding instruction to Prince Philip in 1963 when Canadian cutters put together a tour through England.

(Cont'd)

As a professional horseman, Collins has had the experience of hauling horses in different trucks and trailers in Canada, United States, Europe and Australia.

He was one of the horsemen consulted by Miley Trailer Company on requirements for horses in trailers and is currently working with Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch to make a film on "Trailering Your Horse".

Collins' clinic on teaching the young horse to load correctly and retraining the bad-loading older horse will be staged in the Breeders Hall Wednesday, September 7 at 3:30 p.m. and Thursday, September 8 at 11:30 a.m.

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Contact: Les Burwash
297-6650

August 22, 1988
For immediate release

New 4-H specialist appointed in Vermilion

YVONNE LOVE

A one time Peace River region 4-H club member has been named the new 4-H specialist in Alberta Agriculture's northeast region.

Yvonne Love, who was born and raised at Grande Prairie, will be assuming her new post in Vermilion September 1.

She has been serving the region as acting 4-H specialist since March, following the resignation of Adele Reichert.

Her appointment was recently announced by R.F. Berkan, director of Alberta Agriculture's northeast region.

Actively involved in the family farm near Grande Prairie, Love was at one time a member of a 4-H clothing club in the south Peace community.

After completing high school in Grande Prairie she attended the University of Alberta in Edmonton, graduating in 1986 with a bachelor of science degree in agriculture, majoring in animal science.

The specialist worked for an Edmonton based livestock feed sales company before accepting a position as the 4-H regional assistant in Vermilion in September 1987.

She held that post until being named acting regional specialist this spring. In her new capacity she will be responsible for managing the 4-H program in the northeast region and co-ordinating services and resources for 4-H clubs in the region.

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Contact: Yvonne Love
853-8109

Long-time southern Alberta agriculturist retires

Hundreds of farmers and provincial government officials are expected to attend a retirement banquet in mid-September for one of southern Alberta's longest-serving agriculturists.

John Calpas, who spent most of his 32-year provincial career in southern Alberta, will be honored with a special supper at 6 p.m. September 16 in the Lethbridge Lodge Hotel.

Raised on a one-section mixed irrigation farm at Tilley, Calpas graduated from the University of Alberta in 1956. His first job was assistant district agriculturist in Taber, which was expanded to district agriculturist, a position he served for 13 years.

In 1969, Calpas became regional director for the Alberta Agriculture Department in Lethbridge.

After helping negotiate a unified municipal and provincial office complex in Taber, Calpas used the experience to push hard for a similar structure in Lethbridge involving the provincial and federal governments.

After moving much of the provincial staff into office space at the Lethbridge Community College, talks started between the province and federal government to build the Lethbridge Agriculture Centre. The decision to move both levels of government agriculture services under one roof was supported by Calpas' boss Cy McAndrews and Ed Andrews, director of the Lethbridge Research Station. That centre opened in 1979.

Calpas moved to Edmonton in 1972 as director of extension, and in that role recommended establishment of an irrigation division within the agriculture department; an annual Agriculture Week and Agriculture Hall of Fame recognitions; venture capital and loan support for alfalfa cubins, grain corn, field bean and fresh vegetable industries; establishment of an on-farm apprenticeship farm training program, and; on-farm demonstration programs.

One of those recommendations was prophetic. In 1984, Calpas moved back to Lethbridge as director of the irrigation and conservation division.

Anyone interested in attending the retirement supper should contact Erica Wentz at the Lethbridge Agriculture Centre, 381-5140.

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Contact: Erica Wentz
381-5140

For immediate release

Best of Compu-Farm newsletter available to producers

In response to many requests Alberta Agriculture has made available back issues of its agricultural computer newsletter as well as a package of all accounting software reviews published to date.

"Compu-Farm" is a monthly publication which is available to farmers, agribusinesses, and others interested in the agricultural applications of computers.

The newsletter includes reviews on farm accounting and record keeping packages, articles on the pro's and con's of newly-released software and hardware, gives an honest opinion of new developments in the computer world, and frequently reflects on the business of managing a farm with a computer.

The cost of each back issue of Compu-Farm is $1.50 per issue, and $5 for each collection of software reviews to date.

If you are interested in receiving specific back issues of Compu-Farm and/or the software review package, call Beth Lausen or Bruce Waldie at (403)556-4240 (R.I.T.E. 154-1240), or write: Compu-Farm, Alberta Agriculture, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta T0M 1P0.

Those owning modems who are interested in receiving the newsletter may leave a message on the Compu-Farm Computer Bulletin Board System by calling (403)556-4104 after business hours and on weekends. An order form will be sent to you.

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Contact: Beth Lausen
556-4240

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AGRI-NEWS

SEP 22 1988

August 29, 1988

For immediate release

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For immediate release

Reduced production boosts grain and oilseed markets

Alberta grain and oilseed producers can expect improved markets to continue through the 1988-89 crop year as reduced supplies and increased consumption push prices up.

Charlie Pearson, a grains market analyst with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton, says farmers shouldn't rush to immediately lock this year's crop into price contracts.

Pearson says they should develop a marketing plan which sets targets for selling prices and then sell the crop off in stages as the market reaches those target prices.

"It's obvious producers should take advantage of prices while the market is strong," says Pearson. "But I wouldn't recommend they lock their entire crop in at fixed prices now, but sell it gradually over the crop year. I would suggest they try and have this crop sold by the end of the 1988-89 crop year next July and avoid any carryover. Markets are good this year for several reasons, but next year - 1989-90 - could be another story."

The specialist, in his quarterly grains and oilseed situation and outlook report, says a combination of reduced seeded acreages (for some crops), a widespread drought in parts of Canada and the U.S. which has reduced expected yields, and continuing strong demand for wheat, feedgrains and oilseeds have contributed to price increases.

He says the story is the same for nearly all commodities - prices have dramatically increased this year over 1987 because of the reduced supply situation and further price increases are expected.

Pearson says while there are many unknowns about the 1989 crop year, he says one sure bet is that world farmers will be seeding more acres of all crops next spring to take advantage of improved prices. He says this will affect the supply situation.

Commenting on wheat production, Pearson says in spite of the yield problems in North America, on the world scene there will be very little change in wheat production.

(Cont'd)

However with a recent U.S. Department of Agriculture report predicting record consumption to exceed production, there should be a further reduction in wheat stocks.

He estimates North American wheat production will be down about 16 million tonnes this year, split about evenly between Canada and the U.S.

The specialist says although the Canadian Wheat Board initial payment for wheat is up about $30 a tonne this year to $150 a tonne (in store Thunder Bay/Vancouver) there is also potential for a further price adjustment during the year. Again with a tight supply situation expected Durham wheat prices have also increased. The initial payment this year increased $50 a tonne to be set at $175 a tonne.

"The barley situation is exactly the same as the wheat situation," says the specialist. "Fewer acres were seeded this year and with the drought causing problems for U.S. corn production, feed grain supplies are tightening. Although Alberta isn't as bad off as other provinces, it is expected that Western Canadian barley production will be down one-third from 1987. There will also be reduced production of U.S. malting barley which should produce export opportunities for Alberta producers."

Pearson says the wheat board initial payment for barley has been set at $120 a tonne (in store Thunder Bay/Vancouver) which is about $102 a tonne locally.

He expects local feedlot and feedmill barley prices to reach $130 to $140 a tonne by winter.

The market analyst says the canola market has been on a roller coaster ride for the last few months, driven primarily by the drought conditions in the United States.

He says U.S. soybean carryover at the end of the 1988-89 crop year is expected to be about 3.9 million tonnes which is about half of what it was at the end of the 1987-88 crop year.

While canola elevator bids range between $330 and $350 a tonne, Pearson says prices are expected to increase further by late fall, once harvest is complete.

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Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

August 29, 1988
For immediate release

More than 2,200 attend Brooks field day

More than 2,200 visitors from across the province covered the grounds at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center in Brooks for the annual showcase of what's new in horticultural and alternative crops.

The visitors were responding to the center's 26th annual invitation to go back stage for a look at the type of research and development work conducted by the 15 research scientists and 44 support staff members who work at the 500-acre facility.

SOME OF THE 2,200 VISITORS TOUR THE GROUNDS AT THE BROOKS CENTER

With this year's theme focusing on commercial horticulture, displays, lectures and grounds tours gave guests a glimpse of the scope of the horticulture industry in Alberta.

(Cont'd)

"We want to get across the message that horticulture is more than backyard gardening," said center director Tom Krahn. "It is a commercial industry in Alberta worth hundreds of millions of dollars which employs thousands of people."

"Hopefully through the field day we can make the public more aware of the size of the industry as well as make them aware of our role in supporting the industry."

The center, which was established in 1951 and is the largest horticultural research facility in Western Canada, conducts research and extension programs in most facets of horticulture. These programs include fruits, vegetables, ornamentals, potatoes and greenhouse and speciality crops.

Plant disease, weed control, entomology, plant diagnostic, crop storage and food processing programs are also conducted at the center.

Clive Schaupmeyer, head of the horticultural production section says if people look at the bottom line, horticulture is a big business, in Alberta.

"If you look at any one area of horticulture, it can't compete with the major commodities such as grains, oilseeds and livestock," he says. "But collectively horticulture is a multi-million dollar a year industry.

"As one example, recent figures indicate Canadians spend about $2 billion a year on their yards and gardens and Albertans contribute about $200 million to that. And that doesn't include the hundreds of millions of dollars more involved in commercial vegetable and alternative crop production and processing. It's an industry that has significant economic impact on the provincial economy."

Along with tours of the research and demonstration plots, visitors also viewed displays and talked to specialists on research involving a new system for measuring soil salinity; new varieties being tested for a wide range of special crops including herbs and spices; new products being developed in the food processing lab; testing of new growing mediums for greenhouses; research involving new strawberry varieties and other small fruits, and the work being done to achieve improved potato production.

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Contact: Tom Krahn
362-3391

The search for a better potato

Anyone who has ever sat in the backyard and cut a few seed potatoes for planting in the home garden, probably hasn't given much thought to the pieces that will be planted into the ground to start a new crop.

But researchers at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center in Brooks say the origin of those seed pieces could have a dramatic production and economic impact on the Alberta potato industry.

Clive Schaupmeyer, head of the horticulture production section and a potato specialist, says the Brooks center is the only facility in North America that is studying the impact of types of seed pieces.

He says the final results of research could mean the difference for a potato grower of having a crop of high-yielding uniform potatoes or a lower-yielding crop of variable sized potatoes.

The theory that Schaupmeyer is working with suggests that certain areas of large seed potatoes make poor seed pieces. And poor seed pieces result in poor plants or no plants at all, which means production losses. Gaps in a field of pototoes can also cause growth abnormalities in those potatoes that grow next to the gaps, resulting in a devalued crop.

By nailing down the most suitable size for seed potatoes and the best way to cut seed pieces, Schaupmeyer says the industry will be able to improve production efficiency.

Studying seed pieces is only one area of potato research being conducted at the Alberta Agriculture facility.

Schaupmeyer is also looking at other aspects of production research, such as planting management which includes studying dates of planting, depth of planting and spacing.

As a co-operative member of the prairie potato breeding program, Alberta Agriculture is also actively involved in new variety development.

The potato specialist say Agriculture Canada's potato breeder, Dr. Dermot Lynch in Lethbridge does the actual plant breeding, but Brooks is actively involved in selection and evaluation of new varieties.

(Cont'd)

POTATO TECHNICIAN BOYD HANEL, RIGHT, TALKS WITH A VISITOR AT THE recent field day at the ASCHRC in Brooks

There are between 150 and 200 commercial potato growers in Alberta who plant about 24,000 acres of potatoes a year. About half of the crop is processed into chips and fries, while some 30 per cent is sold as fresh potatoes to consumers and about 20 per cent is grown as seed potatoes for Alberta commercial potato growers and for export.

Farm gate sales of potatoes are valued at between $25 million and $30 million a year, while the potato processing industry is estimated to be worth about $150 million a year.

About two-thirds of the potatoes produced in Alberta are grown under irrigation in southern Alberta. These potatoes are produced primarily for the processing industry.

The remaining one-third of potato production is spread over the dryland farming areas of central and north central Alberta, with production used for seed or table potatoes.

(Cont'd)

The mandate of the special crops and horticultural research center is to provide support to the commercial producers through research and extension efforts.

Schaupmeyer says while there are good yielding varieties now being used by growers, the need is always there to find better potato varieties.

He says researchers are attempting to develop a round white chipping potato to replace a variety called Norchip which is commonly used now. Norchip is a good potato, but it has storage problems and is susceptible to blackleg disease.

In another example, Schaupmeyer says Russet Burbank is a trusted variety used for french fries that also needs improvement. While he says the variety will likely never be completely replaced, it is hoped that breeding can replace a growth defect known as hollow heart.

He says the hole that develops in the Russet Burbank variety is an expensive problem for the industry.

Along with research work, Schaupmeyer and his assistant also provide as much extension services to producers as possible. He says while the processing industry has some field staff, the demand is there to work with farmers to solve production problems.

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Contact: Clive Schaupmeyer
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August 29, 1988
For immediate release

Vegetable leather snack food developed in Brooks

An Alberta Agriculture research scientist in Brooks has developed a new snack food that could have long-term benefits for Alberta vegetable producers.

Dr. Nancy Crowe, food scientist at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center, recognizing a need to find a use for cull vegetables has developed carrot leather.

Based on the same principle as fruit leather, which has become a popular snack in the last few years, the product still has to undergo more tests before it can be commercially produced.

But the scientist says there is no reason why vegetable leathers can't capture a share of the market.

DR. NANCY CROWE
...with carrot leather samples

Crowe gave carrot leather an informal taste and acceptance test recently by watching the responses of about 2,200 visitors at a field day, as they tried the new product.

"Cull carrots is one problem facing Alberta vegetable growers," she says. "They are good quality vegetables that aren't suitable for fresh retail sales because they are either misshapen or broken.

"We recognized the popularity of fruit leather and said why not vegetable leather."

The orange leather, which has the same texture as fruit leather, is made from pureed carrots, rhubarb juice, pectin and a little sugar.

(Cont'd)

Crowe has been working on the project over the last three months as part of her work with the Food Processing and Auality Evaluation Program. She says there are several major steps to developing a new product that include coming up with the idea, actually developing a product which is appealing, refining the process and conducting final analyses.

"The analysis of a new product is important to ensure that it is safe and pleasing to eat," says Crowe. "We run taste panels where we ask panelists to tell us if they like the flavor, texture, appearance and color of the product. This information is used in modifying and refining the process.

"We also do a number of chemical tests to monitor the nutrient levels. The carrot leather product we have is so new that we are still in the process of doing these chemical studies to determine shelf life of the product. The advantage of leathers is that they generally have a long shelf life."

Along with carrot leather, the food program at Brooks has also developed recipes for saskatoon-apple fruit leather, saskatoon fruit leather, dtrawberry-apple fruit leather, apple fruit leather and peach-apple fruit leather.

Crowe says while the concept is to develop these leathers for commercial production, the recipes can also be used by homemakers. She says the cost of making homemade leathers is slightly cheaper than the retail price.

The scientist says once all testing on carrot leather is completed later this year, it will be up to private industry to manufacture and market the product. Crowe says the success of carrot leather could create an economic return for other cull fruit and vegetable products that have good quality, but may lack visual appeal.

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Contact: Dr. Nancy Crowe
362-3391

(Attached are several recipes for carrot and fruit leathers developed by the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center at Brooks).

RECIPES FOR FRUIT AND VEGETABLE LEATHERS

The following recipes were developed by the Food Program at ASCHRC. You may find that you want to experiment and change these to suit your own personal taste preference. These have all been scaled down for use at home. Place puree in a thin layer (1 cm) on a tray. Use a home dehydrator (40-60°C) or an oven set on low to dry (6-8 hours).

Carrot Leather

250 mL carrot puree
250 mL rhubarb juice
25 mL Certo pectin crystals
60 mL sugar

Peel, wash, and put carrots through home juicer. This can also be done in a food processor as long as carrot is processed into a fine pulp. Combine both pulp and juice from carrots. Measure out carrot puree and put aside. Prepare rhubarb juice by putting rhubarb stalks or dices through juicer. Retain only the juice. Mix pectin and sugar. Add to rhubarb juice and heat until dissolved. Remove from heat and combine immediately with carrot puree and blend for 2 minutes while still warm. Layer onto dehydrator trays and dry at 57°C for 6-9 hours. The leather should be dry to touch but not brittle when it is finished drying. Remove from tray, cut if desired, wrap tightly, and store in an air tight container.

Saskatoon-Apple Fruit Leather

350 mL frozen saskatoons
200 mL applesauce
30 mL honey
5 mL lemon juice

Place frozen berries in a pot, add applesauce, and heat to boiling for 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in honey and lemon juice. Puree in a blender. Spread on a dehydrator tray and dry at 57°C.

Saskatoon Fruit Leather

It is possible to make saskatoon leather without the addition of applesauce but the product tends to separate and split during drying. If you want to try this, follow the above procedure using a bit of water to heat the frozen berries in. This leather will have a pleasant, intense saskatoon flavor.

Strawberry-Apple Fruit Leather

250 mL applesauce
150 mL strawberry puree
30 mL honey

In blender make a puree of either fresh or frozen strawberries. Combine with applesauce and honey. Dehydrate.

Apple Fruit Leather

400 mL applesauce
60 mL honey

Combine, blend well, and dehydrate.

Peach-Apple Fruit Leather

150 mL peach puree
250 mL applesauce
60 mL honey

Peel and slice peaches. Heat peach slices in a small amount of water until soft and mushy. Combine with applesauce and honey. Blend well. Dehydrate.

Always on the lookout for feedback, Dr. Nancy Crowe asks anyone trying these recipes to phone or write her with their comments. She can reached at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center, Bag 200, Brooks, Alberta, T0J 0J0, or phone 362-3391.

For immediate release

Forage seed production expected to be variable

With poor growing conditions in many parts of Alberta this spring and summer, forage seed yields are expected to be highly variable for the 1988-89 crop year, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Al Dooley, special commodities analyst with the department in Edmonton, says in his quarterly report along with uncertain production comes uncertainty about prices.

He says there are several factors at play which will determine prices over the next few months. Weather conditions during seed harvest is one question mark, while dry conditions in some of the seed growing areas in the United States, contributes to an uncertain supply situation and uncertain prices.

For the most part Dooley says forage seed prices have declined from the highs of 1987.

"Grass seed prices, however, remain reasonably attractive," he says. "The red fescue crop in Alberta looks good with better than average production expected. Prices have declined from 50 cents per pound in July to the current 40 cent range. An upside potential of 55 to 60 cents per pound is expected."

Dooley says brome and timothy production in Western Canada is expected to be down from 1987. Older stands in Manitoba and Saskatchewan were hard hit by dry spring conditions.

"Alberta's production should partly make up for lost production elsewhere," he says. "Of the two varieties, timothy price prospects appear to be the most favorable."

The clover situation remains very much in question with the specialist noting both red and alsike clover had tremendous vegetative growth, but the seed set remains in doubt - particularly for red clover.

(Cont'd)

"Upside price potential seems limited, however the next four weeks will tell the story from the production perspective," says Dooley. "On the demand side the U.S. Conservation Reserve Program, designed to remove erodible land from crop production, will continue to be important to price prospects in both Canada and the United States."

The market analysis branch specialist says alfalfa seed output prospects look favorable at this time in the major producing provinces.

Dooley says irrigated alfalfa in southern Alberta looks especially good. With average production, prices should remain relatively steady at about $1.20 per pound to producers.

"Again, the weather over the next few weeks will be very important to the outcome of the forthcoming crop," he says.

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Contact: Al Dooley
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For immediate release

"Sales Barn" a new feature at Equi-Fair

Anyone looking to buy a good quality horse for pleasure riding or competition purposes should plan to visit the first-ever "Sales Barn" organized in conjunction with one of Western Canada's premier equine events in Calgary in early September.

As part of Equi-Fair and Alberta Breeds for the World Display at Spruce Meadows, the Sales Barn will feature more than 30 horses representing six breeds.

The Alberta Breeds for the World, which runs September 7 to 11, is described as the most significant promotional activity, available to Alberta horse breeders. This showcase of Alberta's top horses is one aspect of Equi-Fair, a major international trade show for the horse industry.

All these events run in conjunction with the world class Masters Show Jumping competition, held annually at Spruce Meadows.

All horses offered for sale in the "Sales Barn" will have a soundness examination, carry a guarantee that they are sound of wind, limb and sight, free of contagious disease and have no known vices. Organizers say buyers will know the suitability of the horse and be able to buy with confidence. All horses offered for sale will have a listed sale price. The sales barn is located just south of the Breeders Hall.

Breeds participating in this sale include Arabians, Morgans, Quarter Horses, Appaloosas, Pintos and Sport Horses. The horses offered represent a wide range from pleasure riding horses for the beginner rider to the experienced show horse capable of winning a national championship.

For more information on the Sales Barn, contact Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch in Calgary at 297-6650 or in Edmonton at 427-8905.

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Contact: Les Burwash
297-6650

Horse owners should be planning to wean foals

Horse owners should be preparing now to wean foals as the nutrient requirements of the young horses increases with each passing week, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Les Burwash, of Calgary, supervisor of the horse industry branch, says while the growing offspring need more nutrition, the mares that foaled earlier this year have already passed peak milk production.

Burwash says its best to wean foals at four to five months of age and weaning should be done in the least stressful manner.

The specialist has provided advice on weaning methods and requirements.

"As fall approaches, owners of mares with foals at side should be preparing to wean the foal," he says. "Mares reach their peak in lactation at about three to four months post foaling. After this time, milk production decreases by about one-third by the fifth month. Milk production may reach a peak of about 16 to 18 kilograms per day (average mature light horse) and will decrease more rapidly if mares are grazed on pastures that dry up mid-summer.

"By the time a foal is three months of age, the milk it receives supplies only about 50 per cent of the nutrients required for optimum growth and by six months, the milk supplies less than 20 per cent of the foal's requirements.

"This precludes that to maintain a normal growth pattern, foals require supplemental feed from two months of age and by the time the foal is three months, the creep feed is more important than the milk."

The specialist recommends the creep ration be a commercial pelleted foal diet formulated for growing foals. The creep ration should contain a minimum of 16 per cent protein, 0.8 per cent calcium, 0.7 per cent phosphorus and 3 Mcal digestable energy per kilogram.

Oats is not a satisfactory creep feed, as it is too high in energy and foals get too fat.

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Foals at three to four months of age, that will mature to 450 kilograms to 500 kilograms (1,000 to 1,100 pounds), will be eating 1.5 to two kilograms (four pounds) per day. When the consumption has increased to 2.5 to three kgs (five to six pounds) per day, usually between four to five months, foals should be weaned.

Waiting until six months of age or older is not recommended because a stronger bond between the mare and foal developed, making weaning more difficult.

Once foals are weaned, they should have free access to high quality hay plus fed 2.5 and 3.2 kgs (five to seven pounds) per day of a commercially prepared pelleted creep ration. This should be divided into two equal feedings per day. Burwash says to continue feeding at this rate throughout the first winter. No additional supplements are required.

Weaning the foals is usually dictated by the quality and quantity of grass available between mid-August and the first of October. Milk production can be further reduced by placing the mare on a restricted diet or by feeding lower quality feedstuffs like timothy hay for the first seven to 10 days post weaning.

If the udder becomes too distended, relieve the pressure by partially milking her out. From this time period on, the mare is managed based on her body condition and whether she is pregnant or not.

"Weaning of foals should be accomplished with as little stress as possible," the specialist says. "Stressful activities such as gelding should be done prior to, or well after, weaning to minimize the stress on the foal at any one time.

"The foal should be on a creep ration so that it is accustomed to eating dry feed at least two weeks and preferably in excess of one month prior to weaning. Foals on a creep ration prior to weaning have minimal setback at weaning.

"Stress is minimized by having the mare and foal maintained in safe paddocks or corrals prior to weaning and then removing the mare. This leaves the foal in familiar surroundings and it does not have to adjust to a new environment at the same time the mare is removed."

He says this method is recommended for the one to multi-mare owner.

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For the owners of more than two mare foals, another method of weaning involves removing the mare of the oldest foal from the band, leaving the foal to run with the other mares and foals. One or two days later, the dam of the second oldest foal is removed and so forth.

Burwash says in larger bands of mares, the owner could remove more than one mare per day to reduce the total length of weaning time. Although other weaning schemes have been advocated, he says these two methods are practical and result in minimum stress on the foal.

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Contact: Les Burwash
297-6650

Desiccant registered for several pulse crops

A chemical that has been used for years to assist forage and oil seed and some horticultural crops in reaching even maturity, has now been registered for use on selected pulse crops.

Reglone, a desiccant which stops the growing process in plants, can now be used on lentils, field or dry peas, white and red kidney beans, soybeans and adzuki beans.

Shaffeek Ali, a specialist with Alberta Agriculture's crop protection branch in Edmonton, says use of the chemical should allow producers to acheive a more evenly mature, high quality yield.

In naturally maturing crops, degree of maturity can vary depending on growing conditions and often seed shattering is a problem.

Reglone, which can be applied by ground or aerial spraying, essentially kills the plant and allows the crop to mature faster and more evenly.

In the past it has been registered for use on crops such as alfalfa and clover grown for forage seed, canola, potatoes and sunflowers. With an increased emphasis on alternative crop production the registration has now been expanded.

The chemical is very fast acting says the specialist and plants should show signs of yellowing within a few hours. Leaves should turn brown and die within one or two days. Crops are ready for harvest within seven to 14 days of application.

Ali, supervisor of preventive and regulatory services with the branch, says farmers should wear standard protective clothing, plus a respirator, goggles and rubber gloves when handling Reglone.

For ground spraying application he recommends with a normal full crop canopy apply at a rate of 600 to 810 millilitres per acre with a water volume of 90 to 225 litres per acre. For a heavier crop with a very dense canopy use an application rate of 810 millilitres per acre with a water volume of 90 to 225 litres per acre.

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For aerial application with a sparse, non-uniform crop apply at the rate of 600 millilitres per acre with a minimum water volume of 18 litres per acre. With a normal, full canopy crop, use an application of 810 millilitres per acre with a minimum water volume of 18 litres per acre. And with a very dense canopy, apply at a rate of 1.1 litres per acre, with a minimum water volume of 18 litres per acre.

It is also recommended for best results farmers use clean water for chemical application. Turbid water will deactivate the chemical.

Referring to the time of application, Ali says peas should be sprayed when the crop has reached maturity and combining can begin when the peas test dry.

The chemical should be applied to lentils just when swathing would normally begin. The best indicator of timing is when the lowermost pods are yellow-brown and rattle.

On white and red kidney beans, soybeans and adzuki beans the crop should be sprayed to coincide with 80 to 90 per cent natural leaf defoliation of bean plants.

For more information on the use of Reglone, contact any Alberta Agriculture regional crop production specialist or special crops specialist or Shaffeek Ali in Edmonton at 427-5324.

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Contact: Shaffeek Ali
427-5324

For immediate release

Autumn needle shed is a natural process

Farmstead pine trees and other evergreens shedding brown needles, need not be reason for concern, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

In most cases needle loss this time of year is a natural process, says Pam North, a horticulture specialist with the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton.

But North says property owners should check trees to make sure there isn't a disease or insect problem at work.

"In late summer and early fall many people notice the older needles on pine trees turning yellow to brown in color," says North. "Occasionally this can be caused by disease or insects but most often it is just the natural shedding of needles. While spruce trees also shed needles, pines have an open growth habit which makes Autumn needle shed more visible. Needle shed is also very noticeable on cedar trees."

The specialist says pines generally shed needles that are three to four years old while spruce usually shed needles which are six to seven years old.

Although the needles are not replaced, the tree will get new growth on the ends of branches each spring.

To make sure the needle shed is just the natural process, North says to check the tree carefully to ensure it is not being attacked by an insect or disease. She says the property owner can consult a horticulturist or an Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist if they are unsure.

Another factor which can contribute to needle shed is stress. North says if the tree is suffering from stress caused by drought, poor soil fertility, insects, transplant shock or pesticide damage it will often shed more needles than usual.

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Contact: Pam North
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August 29, 1988 20

For immediate release

Check under the hood before buying a horse

An internationally-known horse expert will be in Calgary in early September to tell Alberta breeders and owners about the value of having horses checked by a professional before buying new stock.

Dr. Marvin Beeman of Littleton, Colorado, a renowned expert on conformation of the horse, has long been a promoter of the pre-purchase examination.

Beeman, who will be speaking September 8 at Equi-Fair at Spruce Meadows, uses the examples that many people won't buy houses or cars without having them checked by structural engineers, or mechanics.

He says the same precaution can be taken by prospective horse buyers who don't want surprises down the road.

The expert recommends people should ask an equine veterinarian to examine prospective purchases to determine the strong and weak points of the animals.

During his 6:30 p.m. seminar in the new Equi-Centre Hall at Spruce Meadows, Beeman will explain what people can expect from a pre-purchase examination and give some key examples on what it can mean.

For more information contact Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch in Calgary at 297-6650 or Edmonton at 427-8905.

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